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TLOZS DECEMBER 1989

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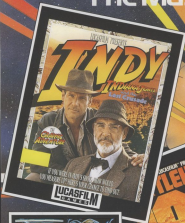
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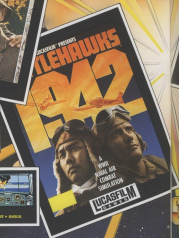
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# The Games machine

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**The Christmas force is strong in TGM...**

Check out page 35 for loads of goodies you can buy your computer for Christmas



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# NEWS 'N' PREVIEWS

STUFF THAT HAPPENED — STUFF THAT WILL

## Atari make music

The top music computers at the moment have joined forces with the top female singers of the moment. Well, not quite control on both accounts, but Atari have signed a deal with Julia Fordham — whose recent album, *Paradise*, reached straight into the Top 20. The agreement involves Atari sponsoring her present tour, which begins on November 17. So what's the link between Atari and Julia Fordham — get a load of this. Julia's audience consists of the more perceptive adult album and CD buyers, technically minded and interested — just the sort of people likely

to be impressed by the Atari computer range. If you happen to pop along to one of Julia's performances then look out for the perceptive adults among the audience — they're the 20 owners.



## Was we Konned?

After many months of speculation and rumors, it seems that there are real troubles at the office of Konix — probably resulting in a post-Christmas release for their still-unfinished Mega System console. Konixes should have Wyndell P. Holloway has been banned from signing anymore cheques, while the rest of the board try to get the company back into shape. (For employees concerned) In TQM last two days ago I thought they were going to call in the November 7 Owners were complaining that they hadn't been paid since Konix took on their services, should

have bounced, but alas, Konix was told, are now rock solid and Konix are getting back on their feet again.

It was known that Konix had experienced some delays but no-one expected it to be this bad. It also appears that Konix turned down many offers for the console, coming from such luminaries as Ocean and George Lucas — although Konix will not confirm any of this. Konix still insist that the November release is possible, however, we doubt you'll be able to find it in the shops now.

Difficulties in another problem for Konix in mid-October, Konix revealed that all software projects had been halted, explaining that all the developers had reached a stage where they could not continue without fu-

ther development of the hardware. Konix Software chief, Jon Teas, commented recently that the Konix was temporary, with projects being delayed for six weeks.

With all these problems, it is unlikely Konix can continue without a major cash injection. Apparently Konix are talking to a major hardware distributor about backing. Regardless, everyone involved in the project to continue the machine will see the light of day — eventually.

## Lost Computer People

In issue 22 we stated that the 'mother' of Little Computer People was the profile David Crane. However, there seems to be some confusion.

The 'Fat Person', which was LCP's original name, was designed by Rich Gold and based on over 10 years of his computer art and artificial intelligence work. Basically, by Gold creates an designs life. The concept of the LCP was conceived and designed by Rich Gold through many years of research. Rich then took the idea to Activision in America. They gave the design to David Crane, who shared some of Gold's work to Activision's specifications. LCP are entirely Rich Gold's idea and concept. We're sorry for any confusion caused, Rich.

What we really want to know is, when can we expect a follow-up? And where have all those LCP gone?

## We're really sorry

Oh dear. We've made a bit of a mistake. To be honest, remember the less-than-stellar rating given to Light Bolts's horizontal shooter, *KO-FU*? Well, the version we reviewed (see how bad *Ko-FU* was a pre-production copy, which, although playable and with seemingly help-integrat-

ed graphics and sound, was some two months away from completion. Our sleeve spoils-goes to all concerned at Light Bolts and we're sure the finished version of *Ko-FU*, due in release soon, will be a great improvement over the copy we received.

## CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

AT THE NEWSFIELD OFFICES OF TQM, Zzap and CRASH.

**1**  
KICK OFF  
(Amiga) all formats

**2**  
STUNT CAR RAGER  
(Microbyte) all formats

**3**  
NORTH AND SOUTH  
(Interphase) Amiga/ST

**4**  
POWER DRIFT  
(Activision) all formats

**5**  
BATMAN  
(Ocean) all formats

**6**  
OPERATION THUNDERBOLT  
(Ocean) all formats

**7**  
ZENON II  
(Microsoft) Amiga/ST

**8**  
INTERPHASE  
(Microsoft) Amiga/ST/PC

**9**  
INTERDICTION  
(Clare) Amstrad

**10**  
CHASE HQ  
(Ocean) all formats



## Ocean get Carrier Command sequel

What's this? Just off the sea machine, some of Ocean's best action games. After many months of speculation, it seems that the follow-up to Carrier Command has slipped through Microsoft's grasp and into the waiting arms of Macintosh giant Ocean. Realtime from Data developing Battle Command for 18 months, primarily on the 386, and expect to release the much-anticipated sequel in March 1990. 3-D graphics are

to follow shortly after.

Battle Command continues the sold video graphics, planned in Carrier Command, and features a fantastic tank equipped with a massive weaponry to use on the enemy missions before you.

32-year-old Gary Bracey of Ocean comments: "This is Realtime's best game yet — they obviously realize this and wanted to place it with a publisher who could do it justice." Don, Dick, Dick, Gary



## Ultimate Golf — Shark Attack

Who thought God, Darwin believe they have created the most realistic golf simulation of our time — and taking a look at the specification, who are we to disagree. The game features every factor affecting a game of golf you could imagine. This includes 11-month weather patterns, 3-D terrain, course-rolling, a computerized caddy and swing patterns. In his seat is Penelope, Greenhouse, Pencil, Pencil, and normal one-on-one-on-one matches. Enriched by golfing veteran Greg Norman, from the subtle Shark Attack, this sporting spectacular has taken eight man-years to create (whether that involved one man taking eight years or 68 men progress-

ing for six weeks is unclear) and that alone merits attention from PC, Amiga, PC and CD-ROM this Christmas. (IT scores.)



## Chicago 90

Good or bad? Up or gangster? Play both in Information's latest arcade action extravaganza. Set in Chicago of the 1930s

accidents, out to murder their own police headquarters (thoroughly set up by corrupt, of course). Once a deal is done,

all you must take control of the fastest vehicle and pursue him. Although, be careful how you handle this one. It's prone to crashing and will produce death-defying stunts of the three stunts at the slightest

opportunity.

If you leave the side of the gangster then get ready for the cops will soon be on you, setting up obstacles all over town. A game that's bound to appeal to all who loved, and remember, Grand's Police Expert. Chicago 90 is out in December on Amiga, PC and PC. (Amiga version.)



Onside, Chicago 90 is described by the French company as a "pursuit" game. If choosing the side of law and order, you must control a team of six police cars to catch a team of dangerous thieves before they flee the city. As your team of cars strategical joined the city then will encounter a variety of activities, including shootings and

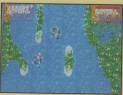
## Toobin'

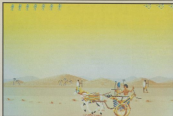
Whatever has happened to the letter 'g' in this past of Toobin's were astonishing policy for Britain? Has our beloved 'g' been privatized? If something is not done fast it's certainly going into legislation. Pardon? Well just take a look at some recent releases. Hard Drive, Drive Home and now Toobin'. All of these taking the important 'g', to be replaced by the most under-standable apostrophe. Who's to blame this time? Well, yes again, Toobin' — or should we say Toobin' — producers of Hard Drive!

Their latest effort will bring a whole to anyone who's experienced the combination of 'Toobin' drive a drive on an old one more tube, John

all, who wants to jump into a Toobin' side view at this time of the year? But no, that, the theme of you who fancy the idea of 'Toobin' the episode on a point-of-view. However, this is undoubtedly the best. However, some Toobin' action. Toobin' looks out to every to arcade games also compete this month.

One- or two-player action, and featuring a whole host of river scenes, as Bill and Jay search out the wildest party they can find (and see from here) which Toobin is, you're at the top of the river (as it the Amazon, Nile, Rio Grande or Colorado) and party's at Toobin. So what is it, but get out your latest roller and take down the river. Great fun and extremely addictive. Toobin' is available on most popular formats. (IT scores.)





# Pharaoh

## MercenaryII: Damocles

"What?" you cry. "How come you're reviewing Damocles, when The One reviewed it in September?" Yeah, we wondered that ourselves when a preview/Demo disk arrived in mid-October. So we rang up Novogames (in mid-October), who promised to tell us that the game was still unshuffled and would be available for review purposes in November. So how come The One reviewed it? Damocles Bruce Jordan then explained that they had come up to Birmingham to see E. N6, we thought, they've not yet mastered the disk so Novogames aren't sending out any copies! Would it be okay if we went over to the Novogames office and reviewed it there? Oh no, we were told, the game isn't together yet, it's all a bit, sorry, unreviewable.

Meaning... it seems that in all the rush for the PC Share, The One must have dropped a 'p' off the front of 'review', and then somebody must have accidentally put a sentence line on the same page. Let's hope Mercenary doesn't 'change' when we see it, and mysteriously 'GAAH' some bugs like Federation of New Tactics staff.

But even to put people off buying a product before it comes out, the early unplayable demo disk we saw didn't look that special, although I'm sure when it's finished in early November it'll be as good as The One's review copy. Mercenary II, Damocles will be available at the end of November on ST and Amiga. We'll have a review next issue — if it's finished in time (the game, that is).

Dead Kefken was the last game to touch on the beautiful and atmospheric setting of Egypt. And although it was based in this century it has a lot in common (mostly war and sword) with Rainbow Act's latest leap into the action adventure world. Pharaoh takes you back 3000 years, to a land where temples and pyramids are already beginning to show the legacy of the all-powerful pharaohs.

The Gods of Egypt are becoming unhappy and dissatisfied with their lot in life. On the day of the Pharaoh's death, Raah (basically an all-powerful being), God of the Desert and of Evil (hey, was he unhappy when they were building out

domains), arranges for all heirs to the Pharaoh's crown to be killed. Luckily for you, Anankh, the Sun God, picked you, the young prince, from drowning in the waters of the Nile. (Sounds familiar. Were there any hurricanes involved?)

Brought up by your fellow countrymen, you must reconquer the royal ladies and move to your land that you are fit and worthy to be crowned the new Pharaoh. Meanwhile, both in trying to have you knocked off.

Ancient Egyptian action-adventure's good, was no longer, for Pharaoh is cut near on Amiga, Atari ST and PC. (Amiga screen.)

## Footballer of the Year II



Believe it or not, according to Guinness Records, Roadkiller of the Year (POTY) sold over 400,000 units when it was released in 1988. Such sales are bound to raise questions about a sequel — and here it is. POTY sales even reflect the original left off.

The sequel features all the playability of the first, with extra strategy tactics for those of you who felt neglected when you missed Roadkill Manager II. As in the original,

your aim is simple — to become the top starter in the league, thus deserving the title of Roadkiller of the Year. Packed with sections, the game includes a league, FOUR magazine, tactics, trivia, statistics, international and archive responses. Thanks like a real man to those missing the live TV matches. Membership cards available for all fans — income is raised (Amiga scores.)

## East vs West — Berlin 1948

It seems amazing that a German software company should write/produce a game based around western Berlin in 1948. It's like Coca-Cola producing a game about B&WPC activity in Berlin. But it's true. Heinemann Arts have done just that in their latest adventure.

The Soviets (or Soviets, as it says in the German-written

English press release) have stolen a bomb from a British soldier and, it is believed, are storing it somewhere in Berlin. Being the part of an American spy party here in East is not too clear; you must prevent the bomb reaching the East before they run out (and, presumably, they have everyone up — so much for Christmas). Using all your contacts in the military and local police force, along with undercover spies in the black market, you must watch out for the hidden bomb and return it to G8.

East vs West — Berlin 1948 is available on Amiga, ST and PC in November. (Amiga scores.)



# Drivin' Force

Digital Magic Software (DMS) has a relatively new name on the scene. According to co-Founder Robin 'Romey Romey' Rugg, their first release, Drivin' Force, is even better than Power Drift. Could it be because they dropped the 'F' from Drivin'? The point is it is a major contribution to road safety.

Not being too dissimilar to the aforementioned Actionzone game, DMS's road racing game gives you a whole new perspective on race cars. You can choose from five vehicles: sports car, motorbike, truck, Formula One and buggy, with a bonus track using jeeps. Each vehicle is rated to a certain selection of the 50 available tracks (from

more to terrain). And with the five stars in each vehicle taking place at different times of the day, each year becomes a tough — all, eventually, if you could end up driving in the dark over dangerous snow, but another element to add to the equation is the choice of competition you wish to take part in. Will it be league or knockout?

There are many more features which add up to a very addictive arcade game, which, unlike some around at the moment (remembering no Run-runes), won't be completed after the first five years.

Check out DMS's Drivin' Force! London on the Amiga this month, and the ST in January. (Amiga scores.)



## Safari Guns

In this time of ecological awareness we have already had MacPom's effort at global preservation, with Rainbow Warrior, and now it's time for the Panda (who always wears very green) to get in on the act. Subgame has come up with some interesting scenarios in their new hot Safari Guns must take the lion's. As an African gamekeeper, you must keep control of the vast animal reservation, whilst hunting off poachers and ivory traffickers. Aim of the game is simple: save the fauna from the menace of extinction. Animals under threat include lions, elephants, rhinos, giraffes and crocodiles. Costs a beautiful short ST, Amiga and PC version (all look forward to playing Safari Guns this Christmas.



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# OUR MAN IN JAPAN

**Shintaro Kato** digs deep and finds that the new PC Engine is more than just a sketchy drawing and a fast processor speed. We've the full story of the sequel to the most controversial console ever...

Who knows what madness lurks within the hearts of NEC hardware designers? If the Shadow knows, he can tell me (cause their recent gaming invention is totally and utterly insane. 'A new NEC gaming machine,' I hear you ask. Not the faded, the mythical, the so far unheard of 16-bit PC Engine? I hear you wonder with suspense. YES! It's here and it's not going to rest (scurry, rest, rest, millions, but...), but somewhere in this year (in Japan at least) Great Or is it? Plus I telling the truth? Yes and no. Yes, there is a new machine from the makers of the PC Engine. Yes, it is coming out in December this year. Yes, it is the next step up from the PC Engine. But, no, it isn't 16-bit. And that doesn't mean that it's 32-bit either. The next step in computer gaming is the all new, all singing, all dancing 32-bit PC Engine.

Let's be going on! Well, I'm not entirely sure. The makers of the *Demolition*, *Nikard*, decided that when they upgraded it would be to a 16-bit machine. The same with *Sega*, *Amiga*, and *80s* are 16-bit. So why upgrade the Engine and not change the CPU? There could be a billion reasons. Too expensive for a console market, not enough chips, or, possibly, 16-bit's not really necessary. If you remember, when TQI broke the news about the Engine, there were many British people saying that the machine was 16-bit — however, we now know it's 32-bit. But I did save a very interesting point. It showed that the Engine was so powerful it could compete at that upon the level of its games. It just had to be 16-bit. But with Hudson both designing their own custom chip it proves that most things can be done just as well in 8-bit, with a few des-



## SUPER PC ENGINE — THE REAL FACTS

NEC only plan to build 50,000 initially (and they'll go in the first week in Japan). The name, though, will only be tweaked. It's to be called something along the lines of the Super PC Engine, in some places on the American side for it, the TurboDrive 16 (the '16' stands for the 16-bit graphics chip, which is present on all Engines). Technically, though, quite a bit has changed. It has 128 of main RAM and 128K of video (graphics) RAM, as opposed to the old Engine's 64K and 64K respectively, allowing more complex screens to be created at even faster speeds.

ated chips for graphics etc.

So NEC really need to improve upon the processor, which seems fairly adequate on its own, and thus cause an unwanted rise in price? Obviously not. In fact they deserve a pat on the back for avoiding the obvious route, not sacrificing quality and saving money.

In that case, what has changed? The price, to around £170 (40,000 yen), so expect it in Britain for around £200. Although it seems unlikely that anyone in Britain will be selling them before Christmas.

This new 32-bit is to cope with the improved graphical capabilities. The new Engine can handle 128 sprites on screen, double the old Engine, and it also has two

background screens instead of one. This means the Super Engine is able to swap between many screens without flicker, which, amongst other things, can create astounding cinematic scrolling. (However, the Nintendo 16-bit will have four — not that they're necessary with fast ROM-card access.)

All sound effects, including the CD-ROMs, will be pushed out of the video socket (without the use of the CD-ROM interface phones). There's no TV version at present, although a FM adapter is to follow for Hong Kong where everyone's got FM, TV.

The new Engine does have one little tick up its sleeve, though, a new external gadget connector. This will include, pos-

sible analogue steering wheels and pilot controls (like on the *Koraid*) which basically make your controls move depending on how far you move the steering wheel/light controls. If you move it a little to the left, it won't, like *Gran Turismo*, suddenly bank left, killing you, your time and millions of US government dollars, but move it a little to the left, like a real car or plane.

Controllers of this type may also respond to vibrations within the game. Anyone who's played *Wheel Driver* will probably agree what I'm talking about. If the car's turning right at 180 kph the wheel will pull to the left. This, of course, adds greatly to realism and is much better than a funny flat controller. Also, through this connec-

# JAPAN

for, sound, data and graphics can be plotted as you get even more wonderful sounds, data, graphics. Could this mean that two Engines could be connected together? We shouldn't speculate.

What of the CD-ROM? You'll be able to use your existing CD-ROM player with no real problems, although it'll look a bit strange stuck out of the side. No interface should be needed, however.

So, all in all, not a vast improvement over the original move like the PC Engine — but the PC Engine is (but then again, not a vast hike in price, about £70 over here). Existing software can be used on the new Engine, but obviously not vice-versa.

If you've already got a PC Engine then be satisfied. You're not missing out on much — yet. There's little software planned for it at the moment, so British gamers should still keep buying the 'old' one in droves. Although, this time next year, things could be a bit different.

Regarding dimensions, the new one is around three times the size and weight of the original (weighing in at one kilo), so computer-minded people should think twice before purchasing the old portable Engine for a brand-new chocolate box-sized console.

## Plotter and tablet

Actually, it's been a pretty good month for Engine hardware. On top of the new Engine, the new graphics tablet and colour plotter is out. The four-colour plotter takes paper sizes of up to B5 (a bit smaller than A4). The graphics tablet is like an electronic pad. Using a special pen, images

can be drawn on it and these can then be printed. It can also be used to trace pictures, so the tablet lifts up and the surface you write on is transparent. Censor, any?

The graphics software supports the most frequently used Chinese/Japanese symbols and ones used for holidays and New Year etc (plus some strange English stuff too). The system (which costs around £200) comes complete with a software card, Artist's Pack, containing a useful graphics program to add colour, letters, and numbers to those tracings, complete with options like magnify, fill, draw, etc.

## Get my drift

And now for something completely different. Competitor-wise, Surprisingly enough... it's a Japanese game, a conversion of the arcade machine. As a stimulant you run along, complete with red boxing hat and jute skin, hitting other really looking people. The main attraction is the size of the characters and the graphics. It looks fairly run-of-the-mill to me but you may think different. Check it out next March.

A sequel to this more interesting is Power Grid, which will now definitely include the bonus stages. If you come first in every race, you can race the course again in a bigger car, the like from Hang-On is even the jet from Afterburner. Release date still unknown for this one. And if you still want more racing games, by P-1 Triple Battle, coming in December. A simultaneous three-player race game featuring all the usual fanfare courses. You'll probably like it if you liked Final

Lap Twin, but race games with a control pad don't have my blood pressure one-up. Now *Winning Run* on the other hand...

Atomic Holo-Pol is coming out for both the Mega Drive and the Engine. Anyone who liked the arcade game is bound to find some thrill in the conversion. 1984 Pro Basketball is the Engine's first basketball game. Some of the teams to feature come from Dallas, New York, Miami and Los Angeles.

Mr Hell, which I'll remember correctly has come out on the Amiga, ST and others in Britain, is to make a November appearance, under the name of Mr Hell's Exotic Adventure. Telling, isn't it?

Whoever hasn't played Chase HQ should be shy. Those who have played it and aren't going to buy the conversion should be shocked. It's easily one of the best side games to make it to the Engine and H2O. The latter looks acceptable but the Engine version is rivet baiter. Also, but morally superior game that promotes peace, Operation Wolf, makes a belated appearance on the Engine, as will Tiger Road. Following much in the vein of Operation Wolf, New Zealand Story will make it to a PC Engine near you soon. Well, at least both games share shades-wearing buddies.

On the Game Boy, Nintendo will make a welcome appearance in December when Hyper Lode Runner is already in general sale. I don't even know why I bother with the Game Boy anymore. You're obviously all going to buy that Atari thing. So it's got colour, moves really fast without burning and can have up to eight people on it simultaneously. The Game Boy is a true handheld. Long live the Game Boy! Well, I like it anyway.

Guess what? That's it for another month! You really should come over and live in Japan. Actually on second thoughts, it's a good thing that you don't. As you'd go to run out of toilet paper, I've taken your interest away — rather you than me. So I guess, at least morally, it's a big sayonara from me and a big sayonara from him, Raycons.



Mr Hell (left) and Holo-Pol (above and right), with Deluxe II (below) coming soon



And a few screens from Pro Basketball



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V O T E D

# ARCADE GAME OF THE YEAR



# Reach for the



## subLogic

the innovators of the home flight simulation, and masters of the art, seem to be taking it easy of late. Their last release was the raved-over Jet, however, they've not been sitting on their hands since. The American specialists have developed a new range of software and hardware to test your flying skills. Marshal M Rosenthal met them whilst skydiving!?



# the skies



At last a simple assignment for a change... 'Marche,' says the flier, 'go into the simulator and find out what's new in that line of flight simulation software.' Sounds like fun, but the Flight Simulator program started the yepes after all. Just a nice comfort zone yet into through the skies of Chicago, and then on to their headquarters in Champaign, Illinois.

No — nothing's that simple. Next thing I know, I'm inside a Cessna, with that first step being some 10,000 feet up. A parachute strapped to my back and a two-seat harness pinning the ears. Where are the people that sublogic is involved? The pilot turns his head as if to avoid and points straight down, flipping the plane as he does so. The effect being that I go straight down. As in out of the plane.

The wind whip at my face as a million invisible hands press upwards with an intensity beyond description. A momentary feeling of darkness, combined with the exhilaration of being totally free. Below are the tops I've come to see. Flattening into a streamlined topsoil. I shoot downwards to become the first point of a star formation; the others being that of Doug Meyers (sublogic's Director of Product Development) and Mike Woodley (Company Disk Coordinator).

A lot of interviews start with a cup

of coffee, but you can forget that here. So I turn the table, um... make that airplane over to Meyers. 'I was never our intention to create a niche,' he begins. 'Our founders, Bruce Artcock and Stu Monwest, were both involved in microcomputer simulations when they met at the University of Illinois in the early Seventies. Artcock was developing a microcomputer-based 3-D graphics package while Monwest had flight experience as an instructor at the University's airport. Together, they saw the need to let people get a real feeling of what it was like to fly via a computer simulation. We're now the first Flight Simulator program for the new Apple II, and just pulled us into the premiere position.'

'We've made many improvements since then,' notes Meyers, 'especially upon entering the \$5000 market (Amiga and GII). Now we work with realism rather than editor responses, do multiple windowing, and external views that can even include looking back at yourself. Plus, the speed of the animation can be boosted by turning off the solid, filled graphics and just using wireframes.'

Meyers continues: 'Enhancing and refining our products is an ongoing thing — adding new items like featured 3-D runways and realistic cloud coverage. The IBM Flight Sim is better than ever, and owes a lot to our SIIA/Amiga versions (which are due for added work and an

upgrade in 1990). We've even a program (Instant Facilities, located within lets you dispose with having to look up an airport's north and east coordinates in order to take off from a specific location. FL does it all from a simple menu.'

Woodley interjects to mention that 1990 will see the release of Flight Simulator II. Designed for eight-year-olds and up, Flight Sim II enables the user to learn how to fly by simulating specific areas of the program for them to control. Put simply, the program will instruct and monitor any aspect of flying under user control, while maintaining the user needed to stay in the air.

A new version of Jet will also appear, with so many improvements that one might think of it as a new product entirely. Also new will be Flight Simulation: ATP (Active Transport Pilot). This gives you the opportunity to fly a commercial airline, points out Woodley. 'You make the decisions necessary in order to have a safe flight. It's full of all the better conditions, too. Like weather reports that aren't always accurate (but does 40% chance of showers really mean?). And remember that the weather changes as you fly from one city to the next.' ATP allows four flight modes: auto flight (fully automatic), vestibular flight, non-set flight, and free flight (a good way to learn to be having most of the functions done automatically while you main-









# TOMORROW'S WHIRLED

## PART 2

And so here we are, teetering on the final decade of the Twentieth Century. If anyone knows what the future holds for games software, it's the companies who make it. And those individuals who make that final decision on what gets released all over you, the unsuspecting public. So, that old crystal ball gaze, Mel Croucher, has been probing the future plans of sundry software supremos, as he goes where no gerbil has gone before...

## IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

As I wandered lonely as a cloud through last October's Early Court PC Circus, the first thing that struck me was the total lack of new ideas in gameplay. The same living dead themes, secondhand sound and frantic graphics. The most thing that struck me was what I heard from Channel Four who subsequently took me to a pub due to a new problem concerning a documentary on hacking, which is why, dear and faithful reader, I'm writing this from the letters. I've sent out of the Olive Sector Memorial Wing, Saint Samanthra's Hospital for the Sick of Heart, Baku. It's very lonely in here, with nothing but interminable repeats and a night nurse to keep me going, but at least a few of my consulting colleagues have agreed to join me to these last. Most forwards, whatever happened to progress? My first visitor is that... Philosophical Incoherent boss, Ian Andrew.

**ME:** Just put up a whiteboard, and watch out for

my life-support plug, Ian. Now then, what do you reckon TGM readers can expect from games software in the Nineties? What will incentive have to offer?

**ME:** Increasing realism. 3-D software. Games will become a complete experience, so that players will feel that they are there, actually inside the gaming experience.

**ME:** Is it to make partial lists pertaining to be computer-aided personalities?

**ME:** Rather than playing with 3D on the screen, we'll actually be in a real electronic environment. In the lifetime of TGM readers, this environment will become more exciting than the real world. I can see computer fantasies becoming genuine alternative realities.

**ME:** Are you worried about publishing that sort of thing? Are there any dangers in total control?

**ME:** No, not at all. Not even when we get perfect sound and perfect video. Sorry, but I foresee no problem at all. What

will happen in the Nineties is multi-user experience, being pragmatic into other people for real.

**ME:** Sounds just like me. Do you want to build a game as to when this will happen?

**ME:** A minimum of five years, maximum ten. And I really mean that, Ian?

As Ian honestly leaves via the arena therapy ward, I see the Product Manager for Mastertronic's budget software. Yes, it's that well-known nude photographic model Andy Wright.

**ME:** Andy, it's your job to decide what the public will be playing in the future. Give me your predictions for software as we head towards the 21st Century.

**ANDY:** 3-D software is gonna be hot, and we will see unless you lay off that machine. The 386 PCs and consoles will take over.

**ME:** What about entertainment on STs and Amigas?

**ANDY:** You know what I think? I reckon that the ST and the Amiga ought to be turned into consoles, too! Seriously. Don't the keyboard alternatives.

**ME:** Don't a large number of people like typing in their responses during gameplay?

**ANDY:** Hard Players don't

want all that old garbage. We don't use keyboards in real life do we, they just get in the way of reality!

**ME:** Is there anything original on the UK games horizon?

**ANDY:** In terms of software, not a lot. If you ask me, we'll be following the American market. Don't ask me something, Matt?

**ME:** Honestly, Ask Andy.

**ANDY:** Ian?

What's this behind the curtains, reveal the next act to me? Yes, if it isn't the Microstar main man Leo Gindy, I was wondering where he'd got to recently.

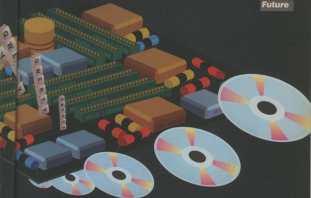
**ME:** You're looking very shaggy Leo. Have you got any predictions for software in the Nineties and beyond?

**LEO:** Sure, but you have to look at it in terms of hardware first. Technology is going faster than the software can keep up with it.

**ME:** Is the speed of progress increasing all the time?

**LEO:** The Nineties will be the biggest and best thing that any consumer market has seen so far. You'll be able to play games, you'll be able to shoot, taste, feel and live in electronic games.

**ME:** Yummy! What formats are going to dominate over the next five or ten years?



**MEL:** Is it what format? CD, audio-visual, floppy disks, whatever it is I don't think it matters. The player won't be bothered if it's on 8-bit or 16-bit or a lump of cheese, it doesn't matter. Players are concerned with what it looks and sounds and feels like.

**MEL:** And what about software games?

**MEL:** I've no idea. Like I say, we are getting into the mass marketing phase of human entertainment ever. Themes don't change, they just get better. Shouldn't we all talk to this guy, Desmond?

And this guy turns out to be the European Sales Manager at Accolade, that Scotch and not with a hint of Irish, Stuart Mathew.

**MEL:** You've been in this business since the earliest video games, haven't you? What's going to happen in the Nineties?

**STUART:** Yes, I've been with it since the beginning of the first video consoles, and in all that time I've never done an interview. How exciting! OK, here we go. You know and I know that video games are very much a part of human lives. It's taken a long time, but the Nineties will see computer games accepted as mainstream home entertain-

ment.

**MEL:** Are you saying that computer games will aren't mainstream?

**STUART:** Compared to TV, video and LPs, not quite. The Nineties will see everyone involved, from toddlers to seniors.

**MEL:** So the range of titles is going to expand?

**STUART:** Doubt right. And if it's on compact disc, PC, whatever, it's the part of it home entertainment exists as common as a radio set. The format won't matter. You can already pick up software titles that suit most tastes after a bit of a search, but by the end of this century there will be titles to suit everyone and anyone. And personally, I can't wait.

**MEL:** Really? Desmond?

Where'd he go? He has, my little needs changing. Music... Sunset... What? You're not it, it's not, you're like a boss, Steve Weiss.

**STEVE:** I bet you're going to see the what the future of software is going to be?

**MEL:** How and you know that?

**STEVE:** It's in your script.

**MEL:** Correct. The buzzword right now seems to be "console". Predict the future of software for TGM readers.

**STEVE:** As far as life is concerned, we are paying increasing attention to consoles. In a couple of years it may well be the new technology, CDi and the like. What that means is that it's going to be much more expensive to perform as a genre player.

**MEL:** So how can smaller companies stay in the game?

**STEVE:** It may mean that smaller games don't at our sales can't afford to.

**MEL:** You shudder, independent software houses have to come under the umbrella of the major players?

**STEVE:** I certainly hope not. We'll have to try and make the changes gradually, as and when we can afford to.

**MEL:** Funny you should mention that, I think I need changing. Can you call someone...

On this, during hour's nearly over. What's this beautiful game? A line out of that is the Chicago who's come to change my paper book? Not a bit of it. It's the dollar comes to push me over. The Edge, some other than Tim Langelot.

**MEL:** What's up, doc? How long have I got? What does the future hold?

**TIM:** My guess is on what's going to happen in the

future...

**MEL:** Guess? Don't you know, doc?

**TIM:** Anyone who says they know is lying. The very best any of us can do is guess what life might be after following the whole thing through from 8-bit (we were the first ever to do a Spectrum game, don't forget) to that we will be focusing on animated cartoons, using interactive technology. For example, with Strategy and Warfield we've already branched down over the development of graphics you need a map.

**MEL:** Is it all about memory and storage capacity? Isn't console and fresh ideas important?

**TIM:** When the facility is there with CD-ROM, interactive disc or whatever, I want to use the same software engines to produce virtual interactive worlds. That's where I think the Nineties are going.

**MEL:** You know something? I thought that's where the Nineties were going. It's a funny old world. **TIM:** Desmond?

It was I got out of that something's, I'm going to write the definitive guide to the future of computing. But you'll have to wait until next month to read it. Russell Barnes?

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# Robin Candy's PLAYING TIPS

**I**t's Christmas! Well, not at the time of writing it isn't.

It's hard to get all festive at the beginning of October. I pose I could fake it: 'How was it for you then?' 'Oh, Christmassy.' But it doesn't really come over right, does it?

A slight error crept into last month's Playing Tips. The Batman pokes weren't for Batman — The Movie but Batman — The Caped Crusader. When the poke was written, the latest Batman game hadn't been released and I didn't realise that there would be any confusion, sorry!

So, without further ado (or even a mention of crossfade sampling with my new sampler), it's on with the tips.

## Xenon II (ST/Amiga)

Steve Potts and Michael Hart reckon this is probably the best shoot-'em-up this year and we'll have to agree with



them. Here are some of their tips.

### Level One

Shop A: Buy health if needed.  
Shop B: Sell rear shot, buy double shot, buy side shot.

Guardian B: Shoot at eye. Stay at the bottom of the screen, and push down if necessary to avoid the mines, but do not do so when trying to shoot at the eye as your range is very limited. Try to move in close and strike when the guardian's tongue is retracted.

### Level Two

Shop A: Buy health if needed. Only buy side shots if you bought one on the previous level.

Guardian A: Move up and left and wait till all of the guardian has appeared. Shoot one of the eyes and then stop firing. Now manoeuvre directly above one of the tubes. As soon as you get a chance, shoot the second eye. When the screen starts to swirl downwards, stay slightly up to avoid the worms that come out of the tubes at the bottom of the creature. Dodge any worms that do get in your way and shoot the final eye.

Shop B: Sell side shot. If you have enough money sell your cannon to help finance buying two lasers. Buy one or two lasers. Buy power-up. Buy health.

Guardian B: Shoot the weblike barriers on the left and right and move up the side of the spider. As soon as the spider moves left, do it. Move into a position directly beneath the spider and shoot it in the mouth. When it dies, go down and collect the cash as it falls.

### Level Three

Shop A: Buy power-up. Buy health if needed.  
Guardian A: Shoot in the eyes with a laser.

Shop B: Sell rear shot. Buy laser. Buy power-up. Buy side shots. Buy health if needed.  
Guardian B: Move left and wait for the snake to appear. Shoot its head constantly with a laser. When he goes into a hole move to the right and wait. As soon as it emerges start shooting again.

### Level Four

Shop A: Buy side shots. Buy health. Buy health.

Guardian A: Avoid the fireballs and move left. Shoot smaller heads with side shots then shoot its tail with a laser. Move down

and then sweep back and forth across the screen while shooting at its head with lasers.

Shop B: Buy laser. Buy power-up. Buy health. Experiment with some of the new weapons.

Guardian B: Avoid the creature's tongue and move to the top left of the screen. Shoot its eyes with side shots and move as far up as possible. The creature will now reposition itself where it can easily be killed with side shots.

### Level Five

Shop A: Sell everything and buy a tank. Buy extra lives with the remainder of your cash.  
Guardian A: Shoot the smaller tunnels with your lasers then go for the main tunnel.

Guardian B: Shoot the invaders with your lasers then shoot the smaller tunnels with your side shots. Destroy the laser beams. Within all of the tunnels have been destroyed move down and strike at the bottom centre.

## Sword of Sodan (Amiga)

Mark Empey and Mark Ward, Ontario Canada.  
Type in NANCY on the high score table for infinite lives.

## Tusker (C64)

(C64)

Following on from last month's, I've here the second installment in the Tusker collection.

### Level Two

On the first screen avoid the large monster by walking in an uneven rhythm. If you try to walk in a steady pattern across the screen you'll be killed. Also, on the first screen wait for the pot to drop.

Collect a key from outside the village and enter. Go through the hut to the left of the bouncing skulls screen. Exit by the top corner and pass through the shade of the village to the screen which has a locked hut. Collect the medicine bottle.

Enter the large hut through the round door with the key above it. Move right and collect the stings and matches from the room which contains the altar. Use the matches and punch the idol to turn it. Continue to punch the idol and collect the oil from behind it.

Enter the screen to the right and give the medicine bottle to the angry witch doctor (keep use the punch movement). The chief will now stand up and you will see a key in the objects part of the status area.

Exit the village area and give the key to one of the natives outside the screen with the sliding gate on it. Enter through the open gate to exit to the next section.

# Shadow of the Beast

(Amiga)

This month's Star Tip comes to us from Stephen Murphy from Lunsbury for his complete guide to *Shadow of the Beast*.

At the start of the game go left. Do not go down the well, listen going through the woods watch out for the two small spikes in the ground which spring up as you walk over them. Keep going left until you come to a tree which says 'H' and go in.

Once inside beware of the flame which shoots across the floor. Now go right, down, left, down, right and avoid the spikes. Then go down, left, down, left and you should be now crossing a bridge. Whenever you do not go left because you will fall and die. Go down, right, down, left, down, left and keep hitting the bot that the monster is holding

remember to keep slaking or your head will get fried. Once the monster has died you will have a plasma ball to use. Now go right, up, right, down, right, down, left, left, watch for the drive from above and jump across a hole to get a key. Go right and drop down the hole. Go right and collect the yellow then go up, up, right, up, right, up, left, up, left, up, right. Kill the monster with the two heads. Then take the first up and go left until you see a switch. Hit this. This will allow you to collect the power punch later in the game.

Go right and take the first up then go right to increased strength. Go back left. Continue past the skeleton and take the key. Now go right then left, down, right, down, right, up, right, watch out for the spike, down as far as possible, left, then the first down, right, down, continue right until you get to a

pothole. Now go left and take the first down, right, down, left and watch out for the flame. Go down, left, down, left, up, left, down, left, up, right and collect the power punch. Go left, down, down and keep heading right until you find a wall. Kill the monster and go up. You should now be above ground.

Continue right whilst taking pillars to increase your strength. When you get to the castle go passed the door and jump up to get the book. Go back and enter the castle.

Once inside, go left, up, right and collect the extra strength. Go down, right, up as far as possible, left, down, left and collect the poison. Beware of the monster's jumping out of the trap door in the floor. Then go up, right, to collect a poison and finally the spider at the far right. Now go as far left as possible then down, right, down,

right and left down, then left and cross over the bridge. Down, right, down, left and continue left until you find a chest.

Hit it and collect the gun. Now go as far right as possible until you find a force field. Use the spinner to go through it then go up, left, down, left, up, right, down, left as far as possible then down, right and kill the three-headed dragon. Go through the door.

Keep going right, whilst taking pillars to make strength. Hit you get to a giant monster. Hit the photos above and below to trigger until it blows up. If you have the second key go through the door and leave the castle. Go right. Hit the pillars to build up your strength and finally kill the dragon at the end. You've finished the game.

## Rolling Thunder (ST)

Kathy Hammond, New Malden.  
When the base is laughing on the title screen type in 'jamblo'. The cheat mode is now activated, you now have infinite lives and can progress through levels by pressing 1.

## Gemini Wing (All Formats)

James Oates, Liverpool.  
Type in the following codes to skip to higher levels of the game.  
Level 2 — CLASSIC  
Level 4 — PRIZED  
Level 5 — UNDISCOVERED  
Level 6 — DISCOVERED  
Level 7 — DISCOVERED



## Batman — The Movie (C64)

Mark Studdart, Falmouth.  
Complete the first level and load up the submarine stage. Then load at your lives. When you are about to reload to side 2, don't reload just press play to load up the submarine stage. You will now have infinite lives.

## Vigilante (C64)

Edwin Mok, Battersea.  
Type in 'green crystal' on the high score table. Now when pressing F1 during the game you will awarded with an extra life, while F8 will advance you a level.

## Space Quest 3 (All Formats)

Greg Wiley from Basingstoke has supplied these tips on how to get out of the spaceship on this popular Sierra

### Online game.

At the beginning of the game go down a screen and then go right. You will see the junk conveyor. Get into it and go to the top. Type 'Get Up' and walk in the opposite direction to the conveyor belt.

Walk right to the edge of the belt and type 'Jump'. Walk left for the next two screens and type 'Climb Down' to get onto the machine. Move left to the other side of the screen and exit to the next screen. Position yourself in the middle of the screen and type 'Press Claw' to release the claw mechanism, that for it to grab the very next

valor and return to the machine. Move Roger and the machine right through the next three screens. Position yourself at the front of the screen and type 'Press Claw'. The robot should now be placed in the ship below. Then return to the screen where you originally found the machine. Climb down onto the blue platform and fall down the chute into the pit of junk. Walk onto the pit wall on the left. Take the reactor and wait. Once the lights have gone dim walk over to the ladder and climb up. Try and remember the whereabouts of this hole. Take the ladder.

## Altered Beast (Sega)

Dennis Ragan, London.

Press up-left then button one and you will start the game with more energy than usual.



Go up a screen then go right. Go through the tunnel. You will now be attacked by a large rat. Go back to the hole. Use the ladder and climb down it to get back to the cave. Get the ladder again and return to the surface. Go back to the tunnel and take some wire off the wall. Continue to the next screen which contains a large robot's head. Walk carefully around to the front of its chest and type "Ole's Head".

Walk to the right side of the ship and type "Use Ladder". Climb the ladder and walk carefully along the top of the spaceship to the round hatch.

Open the hatch and climb inside. You will see a picture of Roger's head and an open compartment in the floor. Type "Use Reactor" then "Use Wire". The ship is now ready for flying. Climb into the cockpit, start up and type "Look At Computer". Press one for engines, then seven for radar and three for fuel tank. An alarm should warn you that you cannot go any further. Look at the computer again and press eight for weapons system. Now press P for food should then press the Spacebar to blast a hole in the ship. You're now free to roam wherever you please.

## £50 WORTH OF SOFTWARE MUST BE WON!

Each month the reader of the best set of tips, POWs or maps will receive an incredible £50 worth of software of their own choice, along with a TGI T-shirt to keep you warm through the winter nights. Based on your gaming information in *Hidden* 'sample' *Canby's Playing Tips*, TGM, PO Box 10, Lullferr, Shropshire S16 10A. Draw last up before I depart for another month. Don't work late nights at the office when Warren Lippworth decides to bring his dinner of curry sauce on steps to help him through those last minute reviews. What a hunt!

# Project Firestart

(C84)

If you're having problems with this game just use these tips and maps from Terry Cole of Bravo Troop SHPO 100 and it shouldn't be long till you complete the game.

1) Open the oxygen control valve and raise the head shield in the isolation control room to keep the Muties down.

2) The plasma gun is very effective, use it wisely, there is only one on the ship.

3) You cannot enter Cryo until Anna wakes up.

4) You cannot gain access to the bridge without the passwords from the freight lake.

5) Once you have got the passwords and the scanner tag, you will always meet a Mutie near the lift in the freight lake.

6) Rescue the women from Cryo. Take her down the lift in G1 to the disposal room and put her in the waste pod. Later spend the pod in waste control.

7) Do not enter the other room in corridor F, it is full of mutants.

8) After setting the self destruct switch, wait the time to inform them. Don't forget to spend the

pod.

9) Be as quick as possible, if you take too long, Anna will shut off the ship's power.

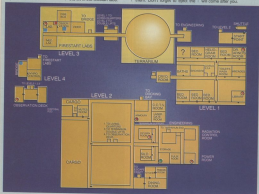
10) There is no life room in corridor J.

11) Your health drops on entering the freight room.

12) To get to the escape craft you have to go through two rooms and open a set of doors. Both rooms contain Muties.

13) Each first-aid box can only be used twice.

14) If you escape from the ship after Anna has woken up, he will come after you.







# PICTURE THIS

**WIN! OVER £100-WORTH OF  
CAMERA EQUIPMENT**

**WIN! TEN COPIES OF  
BAD COMPANY**

**WIN! TEN COPIES OF STARBLAZE**

# 0898 555080

Picture yourself inside a space ship, flying through an asteroid shower. You've never flown this ship before, although it seems strangely familiar. The rocks disappearing into the black void of space. You hear a buzz in your ears. Lights flash in front of you. It's the radar, lighting up like a Christmas tree. From all around you come customised shrieks — and these guys aren't here to polish your paintwork.

You instinctively lean forward and press a button on your control panel. Two jet rockets shoot out from the side of your ship, spinning through space, and blast into the enemy ships. You duck and dive as the raid hares either scatter space dust, or hugged out (splat). It's done.

Suddenly, from a side cannon, out shoot two larger fighter ships, with guns blazing. Behind them, two support frigates each bring plasma bolts. The leaders fly forward, one comes left, the other right. What to do? You concentrate on one — the left one. You turn violently, the G-forces pulling at your neck muscles, not into position and turn her into space garbage at the flick of your wrist.

The two smaller ships fly by you. Their pilots passing you a look gun. Why? You don't see it. You hear it. A plasma bolt ripping into the rear field of your ship.

There goes the bounty. Time to get outta here. You spin around and head for home, not before you send one of the support fighters to the galactic scrap heap. They may have one final battle, but you'll be back!

Back to the real 3-D space saga from Logotron, entitled STARBLAZE. Available at all good retailers for the Amiga and ST now, at just £19.99 (well-disguised) p.p.h.

But hang on a sec! What's this? Another Logotron game to promote, who if you think I am, I am. I say, I mean! Oh, well, here goes.

Picture yourself... no hang on, I've done that one.

Ever felt as if you were surrounded by a bunch of creeps — the real scum of the earth? (don't have been it throues at the weekend then.) There's only one thing to do — KICK ASS!

In **BAD COMPANY** (again from Logotron, on the Amiga and ST at just only a mere £19.99) you are amongst such battle, with your only companion a trusty handgun, loaded with real belly-busters to put the creeps where they deserve to be — on the floor, kicking grit. Transferring in first-person perspective through a maze, real-life jump out from all sorts of places. You can choose to be represented by any of eight

heroes, and a two-player option with that extra dimension.

So what's the point of all this 'battering'? Well, Logotron have £100-worth of CAMERA, plus EQUIPMENT, to literally give away. There's also TEN copies of Star Blaze and Bad Company up for grabs. To enter, fill in the coupon below with the answers to five questions set by the TGM guys on many weird and wonderful subjects. So where are these questions? Simple, just ring 0800 555080, and all things going according to plan, you should have the answers

ready to jot down on the piece of paper. Then, just send your entries to: **AN EXCITING LOGOTRON COMP. TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY10 1DB.** Entries must reach us by December 10.

The TGM Competition Hotline is produced in conjunction with Chatterbox Ltd. Calls cost 25p per minute (plus 30p at other times, if you don't pay the phone bill, check with the person who does first).

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## SIM CITY

What you should know about the game of the year.



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# CENTRE

## Mistletoe and Wine

# BYTES



~~~~~ Christmas is a time for giving. ~~~~~ So why not treat your computer to a few gifts this year. The Centre Bytes team have been out and about tracking down the latest add-ons for the Amiga, ST, Spectrum and Commodore 64. Whether you're after a hard drive or a mouse mat there's something for everyone. But remember to stock up on plugs and batteries before the big day to avoid those Christmas Day blues brought on by non-working gifts. And do keep your guarantees in a safe place should something go wrong. ~~~~~

### ALSO IN CENTRE BYTES

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# AMIGA



Amiga owners are spoiled for choice this Christmas. It's not a case of what's available, rather what do you want?

## Hard disk

Amiga disk loading times are notoriously slow and coupled with the amount of disk swapping required by some programs, loading can be a real pain. A second drive may solve the problem of disk swapping but it doesn't really decrease loading times. The Commodore 4560 hard disk (C0456) provides 30MB of storage capacity, fast access times, room for an additional drive head and a SCSI port too. It can be fitted to any SCSI hard device. It's not easy to use, just plug it in and you're ready to go. Most application packages and some games now provide options to copy the program and save files to hard drive for retrieval at a fraction of the normal disk loading time.

## Extra RAM

Sooner or later you're going to want a RAM expansion. Games are already filling the Amiga's memory to capacity and it's only a matter of time before games start to require 1MB machines only. Most application packages already require a minimum of 1MB RAM. Commodore's 4561 RAM expansion is the most popular expansion kit available for the Amiga. It slots into the port on the underside of the computer, providing you instantly with an extra 512K RAM. There is also a battery-backed-up clock which maintains the correct time and date even when the Amiga is switched off. The retail price of the unit is £129 but prices do vary from supplier to supplier, so do shop around. One of the cheapest outlets we found is Trilogix, who can supply Amiga RAM expansions to £80.00.

## Books

If after reading TGM's Christmas articles, you may want to get

involved in the world of bulletin boards and videodisc systems — but, you'll need a modem. The Designer Modem (D113.89) is a Telogix plug-in to the serial port of the Amiga (a cable is supplied) and British Telecom's standard telephone socket — all you need then is some communication software which can be bought cheaply from Public Domain libraries. All the modem settings, such as baud rates and transmit/receive modes, are accessible from the modem's front panel while LEDs indicate the modem's current status. The accompanying manual explains all the communications jargon and procedures that you will need to understand to get started.

## Amplification

The Amiga sound chip is one of the best featured in any home computer, but the quality of sound output through a TV or monitor often leaves a lot to be desired. However, the Amiga does contain two stereo sound out sockets on the rear panel. These can be connected to a hi-fi, if your hi-fi includes an auxiliary socket and you possess the relevant leads. If you don't then you'll find Trilogix's Stereo2 (C24.99) stereo speaker system a low-cost method of amplifying your Amiga for virtually any other computer for that matter. The package includes all the necessary leads to connect your Amiga to the small amp as well as two small but powerful speakers. We've been trying one out in the office and it really does make a difference to hear Amiga music in glorious, loud, ring stereo.

## Digitaliser

Trilogix's MIDI-Amiga (D114.99) is a real-time frame grabber which allows you to digitise pictures from video cameras and recorders. Connecting everything up is simple: just plug the

unit into the parallel port of the Amiga then plug your video source into the phono socket on the digitiser.

The invariable rate at which MIDI-Amiga grabs frames makes it very easy to use. Unlike some digitisers you don't need to pause the picture before you grab it. MIDI-Amiga grabs frames at 1/50th second and can even grab a whole series of frames in one go. On the unexpanded Am50 this is limited to four but, into machines can grab a maximum of 16 frames in one go (great for animation).

One interesting feature is the window option. You can grab your frames as normal then define an area on screen to be your window. While displaying your chosen frame, MIDI-Amiga will then only show the video source in the window — creating a transparent effect. The device is initially set to digitise in 16 shades of black and white but this can be changed to any 16 colours. This is particularly useful if you're grabbing frames from cartoons where the colours are vivid and there is very little shading.

Once you've grabbed all the frames you want, you can then organise them into a sequence and flick between them rapidly to create an animation. You can also use this with the window option and create animations with alpha animations.

MIDI-Amiga is an excellent package. Perhaps its best feature is that it is so easy to use, you don't have to be a 'techie' to produce amazing results. It's the ideal first-time's package. Systems can also be saved in IFF format so you can load them into the Deluxe range of art utilities and really start having some fun!

## MIDI

Perhaps one of the biggest disappointments with the Amiga is the lack of MIDI ports. Only

recently has the Amiga started to shed some of the drought fogged by the ST in the music world. Trilogix manufacture an excellent MIDI interface for the Amiga which is a lot more flexible than the ST's built-in MIDI ports. The MIDI 2 interface (C24.99) provides one MIDI in, one Out, one Thru and two extra ports which can be switched between either Out or Thru. This allows you to control up to four MIDI instruments directly from the Amiga, rather than using expensive MIDI Thru boxes or linking the instruments together in a daisy chain using their Thru ports.

## Document Scanner

The Document C544000 (£189.99) from Data Electronics is a document scanner that allows you to scan pictures or text from magazines, books etc into your Amiga. Documents up to 110mm in width can be scanned in at up to 400 dots per inch. Images can be saved out in IFF format and then loaded into compatible art or desktop publishing software. The price includes Deluxe Paint II and Deluxe Print to help you manipulate your images. The normal retail price of these packages alone comes close to £100.



Just a few years ago the Spectrum world was buzzing with numerous add-ons. There were peripherals to interface your Spectrum to just about anything. The 16-bit resolution seems to have changed all that. Few add-ons are launched for the Spectrum these days and many of the devices available a few years ago have been discontinued.

## Backup devices

Despite the recent introduction to the Copyright Act, Permabit Robot's Multiface range of backup cartridges are still available. Not only can you reuse games out to tape or disk but the devices also allow you to print individual screens out or exam-

ine the program's code and make modifications. There are currently three models available: Multiface One (C24.99) for the Spectrum 48K, Multiface Two (C24.99) for the Spectrum 480/1280+0 and Multiface 3 (C24.99) for the Spectrum 640K+2.

## Lightgun

Lightguns seem to be making a comeback. Amstar launched their own model earlier in the year and received some mixed reviews. New Chemical Marketing have entered into the fray with the Deluxe (C24.99). The actual gun seems to be better designed than the Amstar

model. It's not so flimsy and seems to be more accurate. Bundled with the gun are six specially written games, from Code Mission. These include an Operation Wolf clone, a shooting gallery game and a version of pistol (you shoot at the Spectrum to smash the ball around the screen). Sounds interesting.



## Game Day

If you can't bear to be parted from games for more than a brief period of time, then take a look at Nintendo's Game Boy. It's a pocket-size games unit with built-in liquid crystal display. While it may seem to resemble those hand-held LCD games and watch devices of the early Eighties, the Game Boy is actually a good deal more sophisticated. For a start it accepts cartridges (as it isn't limited to one game, the display has been improved so that scrolling is relatively smooth, and the sound quality is amazing for such a small unit. Though Nintendo haven't yet officially launched the Game Boy in Britain yet it is available as a grey import from PC Supplies Services priced £29.99. PC Engine Services also stock an ever increasing range of cartridges priced £29.99 each.

## Centre Bytes

### Bytebites

Games playing wouldn't be the same without a joystick. The large available these days is something — so much so that we've planned a game system round up in the next issue of TCM. The current offer here, then, includes Zip disk Super Professional and Croco both from PowerPlay.

## C64/128



Despite its age, the 64/128 seems to be keeping on long after pundits predicted its demise. This Christmas there are still a number of useful add-ons to increase the scope of your 64.

### Reset cartridge

Backup cartridges have been around for a number of years now, so it seems a bit strange that yet another should be launched bearing in mind the increasing popularity of the 16-bit computers. The Power Cartridge from Bitcom Devices offers the usual program backup facilities plus a number of extras at the low price of £14.99. Some of the other features include additional BASIC commands to enhance Commodore-BASIC, formatted commands for both tape and disk, a reset button that allows

you return to BASIC without disturbing the bit's memory (so you can enter pokes etc), a monitor program that allows

assembly/disassembly of machine code (as it's built-in to the cartridge it doesn't take up any of the 64's RAM) and extensive printer commands allow you to send a copy of the screen to an attached printer. Similar cartridges normally cost anything up to £20 above the price of the Power Cartridge. So if you're interested in this type of add-on this is the one to go for.

### Discosaurus

Before turboised games arrived you could expect a C64 game to take anything up to 60 minutes to load. With the turbo system put down on loading time it also made it less reliable. As the C64 uses a dedicated tape deck it's hard to tell just what is causing a loading problem — it could be a faulty tape, or dirty or badly aligned tape heads. Mills Associates' Load It (£44.99) — with free video film of Top Gun, Temple of Doom or the Living Daylighters helps eliminate some of the problems with its easily adjustable tape heads and LED lights which regulate the volume of the tape playing.

### Disk drive

Alternatively, you could invest up for the speedier loading times of a disk drive. However, Commodore's own 1541 is rather slow (by disk drive standards so it's better to go for the faster Commodore CPC-115 (£129.99) from Electronics Alliance. Not only do you get the necessary leads to connect the drive to a 64/128 but a new operating system (CPC-OS), a point program and a 10000000 word processor.

### MIDI music

Serious musicians can get hold of a MIDI interface and accompanying package for £29.99 from Data Electronics. The Advanced Music System (previously marketed by Fastbit) is one of the better music packages to appear on the 64. Not only can you play-back music using MIDI instruments but a built-in synthesizer option allows you to harness the power of the 64's sound chip and create your own sounds. Data also market a sound sampler for the 64 (£49.99). Once a sound has been recorded it can be played forwards or backwards while editing features allow you to cut out unwanted material. A MIDI-compatible sequencer package is also included in the price.



## ATARI ST



The ST is in much the same position as the Amiga. Basically if you can get it for the Amiga there is likely to be a version for the ST.

### General

Hammer's VIGI ST offers only slightly from the Amiga version and sells at the slightly lower price of £269.95. While Data's Geminiarc 204006 ST retails at the same price (£189.99) as the Amiga version, the Deluxe utilities have been replaced by the Paintworks 3D program.

### Internal drive upgrade

Some of the early STs contained just one single-sided internal disk drive which can't load some information stored on double-sided disks. In fact

they treat all disks as single-sided so if you format a double-sided disk you won't be able to use its full storage capacity. You shouldn't experience many problems with games (these are usually stored on single-sided disks) but utilities often require more disk space and are stored on double-sided disks. If you own one of these early machines (it will say in the manual if the drive is single- or double-sided) it is advisable to upgrade to a twin drive. These are obtainable from Data Electronics at £169.95 each.

However, you will need to open up your ST to fit the drive, and this will invalidate your guarantee.

### External drive

If you're not keen on invalidating your guarantee then go for a second disk drive. The ST's Lifetime drive (£159.95) is a bit unusual because it can be used with several different computers including the Amiga, Spectrum, BBC and PCs. Obviously the ideal purchase if you own more than one computer.

## ACCESSORIES



If you live out in the middle of nowhere like the TCM Creative Bytes team, getting hold of all those little extras that make computing that much easier can be difficult.

### Disk drives

Disk drives are a must for anyone with a disk drive. Unbranded (no manufacturer name) disk drives are usually much cheaper than the brand name variety. However, they are also less reliable and don't always carry a guarantee. There are basically three types of disk, single-sided double density, double-sided double density and double-sided high density, which can come in either 3.5-inch or 5.25-inch sizes. Aimed at a special 3-inch double-sided disk for their CPC and +3 range of computers but this is not a standard adopted by any manufacturer (indeed). Aimed themselves are phasing it out.

Each of the different types of disk are certified to hold certain amounts of data. A double-sided disk can hold more information than a single-sided disk while high-density disks can hold more information than double density disks. Sometimes a computer can be fooled into thinking that a single-sided disk is really a double-sided disk or double density disk is high density. There is a danger here that you will try to fit too much information on a disk and end up corrupting it. Always treat a disk according to its label, regardless of whether the computer overestimates its storage capacity. The Amiga and ST commonly use 3.5-inch D5/DD disks while the C64 and PCs generally use

5.25-inch D5/DD disks. If your local computer shop doesn't supply blank disks try Manor Court Supplies. They carry nearly 1000 5-inch D5/DD with a disk box for £20 and 1000 3.5-inch D5/DD with disk box for £11.60. CPC and Spectrum +3 owners can get disks direct from Manor, or most major independents.

### MIDI extras

Anyone who read the introduction to MIDI article in issue 22 will be aware that you need a MIDI Thru box if you want to connect your MIDI equipment to a Star Network. The advantages of connecting your instruments in this manner is that it bypasses any time lag problems produced by devices that act-in as sending MIDI information out through the Thru port and helps keep your MIDI leads tidy. MIDI Music distribute the entire range of Philip Reed Technology MIDI Thru boxes priced from £12.95 upwards, depending on the

number of ports available. The most basic unit, the V3, features one MIDI in port and three MIDI Outs, while the top of the range V10 offers one MIDI in and ten Outs.

While old analogue synths don't offer the same flexibility as digital devices, with their built-in MIDI ports, their sounds have always been popular and they can be bought for relatively low prices. The distinctive acid house sound was built entirely around old Roland analogue sounds (the TR808 drum machine, SN701 monophonic synth and TR555 bassline). Philip Reed's MIDI Thru box to connect all your non-MIDI synths to MIDI devices.

### Mouse mats

Finding a surface which works well with the mouse is not always easy. So save your self the bother and go and buy a mouse mat. Tinkle H Computing sell a soft mouse mat for £4.95.



## CONTACTS



Bison Devices Limited: 80  
Newark Road, Gainshead,  
Tynes and Wear NE16 1QA. Tel:  
0910 450 1875.

Cheestah Hardware Ltd:  
Merbury House, Portbury  
Road, Farnham, Cambridgeshire  
S45. Tel: (0522) 95525.

Commodore Business  
Machines: Commodore  
House, The Rocklands,  
Gardiner Road, Haleshead,  
Birmingham B14 7QA. Tel:  
0202 770088.

Data Electronics Ltd: Farnley  
Industrial Estate, Govan  
Road, Farnley, Leeds LS14 5P.  
Tel: (0113) 744707.

Farnham Movers Ltd: 65  
Bridge Street, Gainshead,  
Worcester WR11 4SF. Tel:  
0202 79552.

Manor Court Supplies:  
Gainshead House, Farnley,  
Lancashire Walsley, Porsy  
LN1 1BN. Tel: (0525) 87888.

MIDI Music: 25 Middlepiece  
Drive, West Thurston, Norfolk  
NG1. Tel: (0753) 681766.

Miles Gordon Technology:  
Lutonville, Phoenix Way,  
Barnesley S62 9EH. Tel:  
(0752) 50500.

Mills Associates Ltd: Chester  
Street, Eastwood, Nottingham  
NG21 3HS. Tel: (01773)  
781426.

PC Engine Services:  
Southgate House, Black  
Pine Road, Lutterworth LE17  
7JA. Tel: (0153) 735 0888.

PowerPlay Ltd: Blackstone  
Lane, Leigh, Cheshire W9  
5TH. Tel: (04577) 6861.

Robotic Robot 24:  
Dunsmuir Ave, London W9W  
8PP. Tel: (01) 280 8870.

Romby Productions: 6  
Farnham Road, Ashton Road,  
Livingston, Scotland EH54  
8TB. Tel: (0506) 414820.

Tinkle H Computing: Corner  
House, Easton, Strathgill,  
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# TOOLBOX ■ Life in the hard lane

## COMMUNICATIONS

### Hanging on the telephone

Personal home security has been launched. The Chameleon Club as an alternative to conventional home alarm. All money will be transmitted using Personal's electronic messaging service, ensuring that lengthy delays are avoided. The club offers three basic services: ChameleonMail, ChameleonFax, and ChameleonVoice.

ChameleonMail organises an annual tournament which will commence in January 1990. It's closely linked to the British Chess Federation.

ChameleonVoice puts fellow club members in contact with each other for the purpose of playing non-competitive chess games.

Finally, ChameleonFax provides all the latest information from the chess world, such as results from World Chess Championships as well as reviews of chess-related products.

Club members will also receive a quarterly newsletter. Subscriptions to Personal currently cost £6 per quarter. Access to the system is then charged at 7p per minute, between 9am-5pm Monday to Saturday, and 1p per minute at all other times. Telephone costs are charged at local call rates.

For further information, telephone Personal free of charge on (0800) 286 792.

## ATARI ST ■ AMIGA

### Linguistic launches

The Amiga Corporation of ITOS is now marketed to be described in January 1990. Mainframe Software say that the delay has been caused by a combination of technical problems, while several port features have also been included at the request of Amiga users.

## PC

### Fantastic fonts

Having just released the national version of Deluxe Paint II (059-88), Electronic Arts have also announced a companion product for the art utility. Kara Fonts (149-96) features nine new eight-point fonts which can be installed

up to nine times their original size when used with Deluxe Paint II's poster program.

**ELECTRONIC ARTS:**  
Langley Business Centre, 11-45 Burton Road, Langley Heath B40, Berkshire SL3 8YH Tel: (0753) 48442.

Europe House, Acton Green Park, Acton, Middlesex UB8 3PH Tel: (0225) 679886.

## ATARI ST ■ AMIGA

### Sampled delights

Microed have announced more details on their new range of samplers.

**Replay Professional** (£125-95) is the top-of-the-range sampler in the Replay family of samplers. The package includes a hardware sampler, which allows four channels of sound to be played simultaneously, as well as three software programs. The sample editor is used in conjunction with the hardware to actually record the samples. You can sample at rates ranging from 4 to 48KHz. There are various editing commands to help you whittle your sample down to exactly what you want to hear. There's also an effects menu which allows you to drastically alter the sound

of your sample by adding echo, reverb or flange. MIDI options also allow you to play the sample on your MIDI keyboard.

The second program, **Drumbeat Professional**, is a sequencing package which allows you to arrange your samples into a song. If you're familiar with drum notation, you'll find immediately at home with this program. If you're new to sequencing, you'll find drum grids one of the easier methods of arranging your songs. Up to ten samples can be played at any one time with a maximum of 16 samples held in memory. MIDI has also been implemented.

The final program is designed to be used in conjunction with a MIDI keyboard. You can assign various key splits to your keyboard so that different keys trigger different samples. It also allows you to loop samples so that you can sustain a sound for a long time, even if your sample is quite short.

**Quartet** (£48-95) is a sample player package. You can import samples from most popular samplers, including the Replay range, and compose music on four working staves. The package comes complete with a large selection of sampled musical instruments and MIDI options which allow you to record sequences from a MIDI keyboard and playback using Quartet's instrument sampler.

For a full explanation of sampling terms read next month's **ESSENTIAL TOM Guide to Sampling**.

**MICROED:** PO Box 88, Epsom, Surrey E15 4YH. Tel: (0753) 88882.

## WORD PROCESSING ■ COMMUNICATIONS

### Budget packages

Kern have extended their 'Better English' or a 'Better Price' promotion on the E. Spot thesaurus till the end of December. The package includes a database of over 150,000 words and phrases and works in conjunction with most popular word processing libraries for the AT, Amiga and PC-compatibles are available at the special price of £28-95.

Kern have also added a communications package to

their growing E. range of applications. Initially available for the Amiga only, E. Comms 2 (£28-95) offers direct rates from 7p to 99p, access to videotext services such as Personal, auto-dialling, programmable function keys, a software fax to Personal, facsimile terminals and a character body facility.

**KEMA COMPUTERS LTD:**  
12 Housworth Park, Pangbourne, Berkshire RG8 7TH Tel: (0754) 846316.



# Design floors

**More ramblings from that software industry guru, the one and only (thank God) Zag. This month he (or is it she?) looks at, well, perhaps Zag'd better explain...**

This article is dedicated to those cunning bunnies who invented such things as electronic tills which beep loudly after being open for more than a few seconds, receipts with instant two languages ('slightly vulgar' and 'vulgarised') and doctored bills that play a random tune selected from such favourites as The Sound of Music. It is about the pain these bills cause taking on and the many ingenious single-handedly. It is also about something called ergonomics. That is, the interface between the controls of a piece of equipment (or a game), and the operator of the controls (usually raggedly human).

The simple consideration of the fact that someone actually has to use a piece of machinery or play a computer game all seems so simple and obvious, but this is usually with 20/20 hindsight. Perhaps, alas, it is because you and I are more likely to be Users and not Designers, and thus notice these things since we actually use them. In the field, as it were.

For example, I have just had a 20-in. a game of... well, the program requested complete privacy, and I have no wish to be the first person sued for that by a computer game, so I'll just call it *Machos* instead. It is, technically, a game called *Badly Chivalrous*. And I should tell you that, of course. Someone may talk and give the whole game away (if only they would).

You may not have heard of *Machos*, but alone played it, but it is basically a strategy game in which you try to dominate the known universe. I have played it all the way through and a few past games (remember the first, few months), but as I ploughed through it I began to look at the way that the universe were laid out. It was as if a whole group of programmers had been given the same set of rules and each given a screen to design. The basic format of each ended up roughly the same, but on each screen, for example, the Exit button was in a radically different place.

Now there were several layers of screens, moving from one function to another might well involve selecting Exit four times in a row before you could select more... Result: several steps of 'back' for the program to clear the save screen followed by more the return to the text that has and given left mouse button.

This is just one issue that is nagging me as the modern world. I attempt once again to illuminate the galaxy. Maybe you have your own examples.

Ergonomics is part of the design process, a way of taking one or more components which have reached their optimum design, in terms of cost, manufacturability, reliability or whatever, and then looking at the package from outside. If it is to be a machine which will be used by a person at ground level, ergonomics would suggest that the controls are at a height of about four or five feet above the ground. The design is easy here ended up with controls at the very top, or the base, but it is only when someone considers that the way must allow operation the controls are going to have to be readily accessible (especially the CRT button) that ergonomic ideas come into play.

Again, a designer may have to be made between convenience and cost. Consider Los Angeles, for example. They spent millions of dollars extra on the design of a 'boring bus', which would theoretically lower down at the front so that physically handicapped passengers could get on and off. It was only after they had hundreds complaining around that someone pointed out that they could have saved ludicrously by buying long-stacked buses and providing a free taxi service to those handicapped that currently need the bus and walk...

Well, back to the world of games. Millions of man-hours of effort to become Rules of the Game or whatever is just too tedious for most people. Therefore the thing could be tidied up a bit, streamlined, optimised or just basically

streamlined until it is slick.

Good programs have an economy of effort with them, a sense of style. They should also have a variety of means to achieve the same objective, from a simple and self-explanatory (but slow) method, to a high-speed expert method (the advanced users who know what they are doing). This is always a problem for those programs that use layers of menus, in menu within menus.

As I mentioned with *Machos* earlier, it is a pity that there were no short cuts for getting right out of a function. In go elsewhere with just one click — and that, having done so, a short cut for getting right back to where you were previously. Perhaps a better idea is one of those games where you can select several things which present you with a menu of information out of a range of possible ones. Depending upon what you are doing at the moment, you can choose which few vital screens

you wish displayed at any time, perhaps in the form of windows which can also be repositioned as required.

Well, one to worry I was thinking Populous the other day and looking for the Exit button because I was in BIG trouble. As a god, my two step-pods were getting a good working over, and I needed to find him fast. Just as he appeared onscreen, my mouse hand must have moved right, because instead of moving one space further the pointer had moved and I entered Kartopaka instead. With water being fatal, I caught the poor character and promptly dominated about 30% of his population. So, just because the business was too close together or pulling a lever requires a one more high-press (as this is case of rage) because I to operate it effectively doesn't always mean that you can expect the worst — but somebody might be tempted to make a 'better' one...

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# INFORMATION DESK

The Centre Bytes team are back from the pub after a quick lagerade or something to answer more of your computing queries... then they're off to Woolies to check out the new CDs

## Sights on sounds

I own a C64, a MIDI interface, a Yamaha PSR400 keyboard and a disk drive. The toybristol has got 8000 parts but it's not multi-sorted. Can you recommend a suitable sound module, bearing in mind that I only have a budget of £500? Also, are there any good sequencers available for the C64?

**S Jones, London.**

A secondhand Yamaha TX802 or Roland MT32 are perhaps the best buys in your budget range. Both contain some good sounds and the MT32 also features the added bonus of a percussion section. However, you'll need to buy some sequencing software for the MT32 if you want to maintain the built-in sounds. An article on this software is planned for a future issue of TFM but there aren't many available for the C64.

While the ST and Amiga tend to dominate the music scene there are a number of quality packages available for the C64. *Soundberg's Pro 16* (distributed in the UK by *Worldwide Soundworks*) is used by a number of groups, such as *Bank The Band*, and should cope with most sequencing

needs.

*Worldwide Soundworks: The Studio, Church Green, Dunsford, Oxford OX7 2PG. Tel: 0206 616 094.*

## Where do I start?

I was thinking of starting a feature and there are a few things I would really like to know...

- 1) Where should I advertise it? Is there should I go about taking subscriptions? When I see a flash on my screen nothing comes out, but when I don't see it hardly anything shows on the photograph?
- 2) If I want software because a sample issue of the feature will that be enough to convince them to send review copies of software?

**Leigh Kewley, Port Talbot**

- 1) You could start by advertising in TFM's Classified section.
- 2) Firstly the pictures must be taken in a darkened room and without a flash. You will need to take a light reading from the TV screen with a light meter. This will tell you what F-stop to set the camera at. It should be around f/8. Then set the

## Dragon's where?

I think that Amiga version of *Dragon's Lair* is great but I desperately want to get hold of the original arcade machine. Could you please tell me how much one would cost and where I could get one then?

**El Buckley, Cusack**

*Dragon's Lair* is getting on so far now as you should be able to buy one for about £200-400. Whether abroad or from machine you'll get the best price to look in *Chis Chis magazine*.

And just to prove that we're not behind keep up with the game scene, the following go to *Dragon's Lair* — **Space Age**

(ST and Amiga) — should be out very soon. From what we've seen, *Dragon's Lair* has some a marvellous job, combining some stunning cartoon graphics with some very fast to speak Entertainment International will be releasing it over here. We also have that *Dragon's Lair* are thinking off an ST version of *Dragon's Lair*.

**DOH SLOT: 1 Dohy Street, Chelsea, London SW10 0DT. 0845 655 655.**

**ENTERTAINMENT INTERNATIONAL: 4 The Mansions, Leinster House Trade Centre, Shelton, Essex SS7A 6SA. Tel: 0206 541126.**

camera exposure between 1/8 and 1/4 second. The long exposure time is to compensate the television will have effect and produce a smooth picture. If you pause the game before taking a picture, otherwise you'll end up with a blurred image.

This should produce a picture but experiment with your camera settings to find out what's best. If your camera is one of those totally automatic ones where you don't have to set anything before taking a picture, then there isn't much you can do to get a good photo except fiddle with the brightness and contrast on your TV. I don't expect much software support. Most software houses view *Dragon's Lair* skeptically. After all, anyone could set up a *Dragon's Lair* for the one per-

cent of obtaining the software (with the thought). Most software houses will want to see several issues of your feature before giving out any free software.

**Delivered by hand?**  
**Worked by the Wizard of Oz?**  
**Aggravated by Auntie?**  
**Mindless on Merlot?**

Disturbed by what? Send all your Christmas and computing problems to Information Desk, TFM, PO Box 15, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1BB. Unfortunately, we can't enter into personal correspondence, so don't send any letters, please — unless you write to Robin Hood, in which case we'll most certainly display photos in the TFM office.

## Is it worth it?

I've been using *Deluxe Paint* ever since I bought my Amiga over two years ago. I would really like to upgrade to *Deluxe Paint III* but I know this costs 150 Pounds to run properly. What if I was to know is do you really think it's worth the money about £70 to £80?

**David Tolley, Macclesfield**

As you already own *Deluxe Paint*, you can purchase *Deluxe Paint III* at a reduced price direct from Electronic Arts. Just send in some proof of purchase, such as a page from the manual or the registration card, and you can buy *Deluxe Paint III* for £55. P&H

expenses met at £76 at £55.50 less the Christmas Gift article on page 261. So that's already brought the total price down to £74.50. *Deluxe Paint III* was contained in TFM 018. The program is available, and as you're already used to *Deluxe Paint* you'll find it very easy to use. If you're really keen on computers art then it's certainly worth the money and remember the SAM expansion will also come in useful for other applications and games.

**ELECTRONIC ARTS: Langley Business Centre, 11-49 Station Road, Langley, Near Slough, Berkshire SL3 0TW. Tel: 0753 49442.**

## Conversion capers

- 1) Will *Pythons Thompson* ever be converted to another format?
- 2) How about *Shaver of the Beard*, will that ever appear on another computer?

**Mark Rutland, Manchester**

- 1) The latest *Demarc* magazine reveals that *Pythons Thompson* will be available on the Amiga in January 1990.
- 2) *Shaver of the Beard* is being converted to both the PC and ST. The ST version should be out by the time you read this, while the PC version is scheduled for release sometime in the New Year.



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# Moving with the times

Animation is one of the areas that Centre Bytes intends to cover more deeply in a future issue, with a full explanation of techniques and tips for the beginner. In the meantime, Robin Candy looks at a new UK release of an old US animation package for the Amiga, from Brotherhood and imported into this country by Demark. It is *Fantasticon*...

**A**nyone can create stunning animations. All you need is a good set of artistic skills and plenty of patience. Unfortunately, most of us don't possess either of these prerequisites so we need the computer to lend us a helping hand.

The Amiga market is already saturated with art packages, so the latest crop of releases have also featured some set of animation commands, to add an extra dimension to your artistic accomplishments. *Fantasticon*, however, is dedicated to animation only and to get the most from it really needs to be used in conjunction with another art utility.

## Picture this!

An object is created in terms of points. You don't just draw on the screen (as you do in an art utility). You create an object by specifying a series of points on the screen, which are then linked together, just like a dot-to-dot picture. The number of points per object is restricted by memory only, so you can create some very complex shapes. Circles and rectangle commands are also available to save the process.

Once an object has been created it can be filled with a colour or create a silhouette. But what if you want to create a detailed object, such as a spaceship? Then first define the general shape of your ship using your first object, then add the detail using other objects. In this way, the result would be a collage of a variety of objects. This seems to be a long-winded process but it does allow for more flexibility should you want to animate the different parts of the ship.

The number of objects contained is also only limited by memory. If you find yourself running out of objects then several can be contained together to form one object. This is known as a submap.

*Fantasticon* also allows you to import graphics (via IFF) from another art utility or bitmaps. This is particularly useful if

you don't like the dot-to-dot method of creating objects. These bitmaps can also be used as static backgrounds behind your animations (as in the prehistoric picture on this page). However, once a bitmap has been created its content can-



not be altered in anyway.

Animation is created by forming a series of frames (which are, in reality, a series of pictures). These frames differ only slightly from each other. In the first frame, the man may be at one end of the screen, then in the next frame the figure moves to a slightly different position. By creating a number of frames and then linking between them rapidly the figure appears to walk across the screen.

A complex animation can take a considerable amount of time to produce if you have to draw each frame separately. Fortunately the computer can do much of the work for you.

*Fantasticon* creates animations using objects and a technique known as tweening. Basically you create a series of frames

using your objects and the computer works out additional animation frames for you. So you could draw a circle at one of the corners of one frame and then draw it again at the other side of the screen in the next frame. When the animation is run, the computer creates a number of in-between frames so that the circle appears to move across the screen relatively smoothly. Admittedly, this feature has been included on other animation packages, but *Fantasticon* takes it a step further.

For instance, you could draw a triangle

in the top right-hand corner of the screen on one frame then draw a circle in the bottom left-hand corner of the second frame and when the animation is run, the triangle will appear to move diagonally down the screen while changing into a circle. Of course, if you use this with several objects the results can be breathtaking. Imagine a detailed picture of a person changing into an animal, creating effects like this isn't too difficult with this package. The number of frames that appear between each frame is user definable and restricted only by available memory.

*Fantasticon* can also play IFF sound samples on any frame, so you can introduce sound effects into your animations.

This is only a brief look covering the main aspects of what is an excellent program. *Fantasticon* also includes a whole host of additional commands (such as block manipulation options) to improve the quality of your animations.

*Fantasticon* really does make animation easy. Most other animation packages tend to get bogged down in options and feature complex options which only produce unnecessary animations. But so *Fantasticon*, only a quick shot through the manual is necessary before you can start creating your own animations. Options have been kept to a minimum yet they're capable of producing stunning effects. If only all programs were as unobtrusive as this one.

DEMARK: Perry House, 51-57 Lany Road, Putney, London SW15. Tel: (01) 798 2226.



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- \* POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY - 94% - The opposition gets blown away by the utter brilliance of KICK OFF, which has the proper options and the best gameplay seen in any football game.
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- \* NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS - Simply the best football sim we've played on any micro. It's fast, furious and immensely fun. Gotand buy it.
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- \* ST USER - The whole game is a complete delight to play and immediately addictive. This is one of the fastest and most exciting action games around and it just has to be the best football simulation yet.



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# A COMMODORE CHRISTMAS

Valley Forge, Pennsylvania brings one thing to the mind of every American patriot: The World of Commodore Show (well, it does to Marshal W. Rosenthal). Many call it the Silicon Valley of the east, due to the number of software companies situated there. The last bastion of the Commodore 64 also hosts the latest Amiga goodies. Our man in the States investigates...

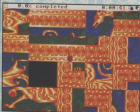
There's some 1,000 fans — many of them young — all of them eager to see what's new, and get their hands on anything vaguely recent-

of paramount importance, as the foreboding dawn proved, letting an array of things along with the obligatory last dollar.

ter-patter of little feet (carrying big guns) can be heard over your own footsteps.

Speaking of little feet, Sierra's Space Quest 3 (Amiga) is due any moment for the Amiga. Those little feet both Andreanna and Joe are in a terrible fix: they've been kidnapped and must write horrible software. Only Roger Wilco (with a bit of help from you and the mouse) can save them. Good graphics are combined with ultra-real sound effects. Plus a somewhat difficult sense of humour.

**'Sound effects (in Persian Gulf) are gruesomely accurate, and the pitter-patter of little feet (carrying big guns) can be heard over your own footsteps'**



Hours of fun can be had with Brenda Feltner's *Jigsaw*. Load in any of format pictures, press a key, then have hours of fun unravelling the picture.

bling a joystick. Scanning the C64 scene with a practiced eye, I note the games seem to be what's happening. So, let's take a closer look.

Interceptor's Battle Squadron (reviewed this issue) doesn't present you for their Persian Gulf Inferno (Amiga). Here you play a Commando who must take out an elite group of evil terrorists. Moving through the levels of the rig, you must also locate the scattered fuel depots. Only by deactivating the nuclear weapon scattered everywhere due to the problem. Unlike the rig, the figure you control moves in all directions, up and down ladders, and performing the odd forward slip before using up to fire the nuclear weapon. Obtaining this weapon is

trickier: the joystick from the machine, one that you begin with two charges fused to blow itself down and a nuclear flamethrower with forty-two clips. Finding more ammo is vital, and it certainly helps when you get hold of a shotgun. Other goodies include an elevator cart, eliminating the tedious climbing between levels of the rig.

Graphics are small, which is good since you can't see what's about to appear on the targets you're too concerned on games. Here, when you choose the same applies for you. This is not a game of diplomacy or heavy strategy. Mostly it's about moving fast (the levels explode within two hours of real time) and getting rid of anything in the way. Sound effects are gruesomely accurate, and the pitter-

## Doing it the C64 hard way

New C64 hardware is very scarce but the world of Commodore is where you can find it. First up is the improved JiffyDOS. This consists of replacement ROM chips for the 64, as well as the standard 1571 disk drive. Once installed, a series of special commands now become available. These include disk formatting, directory listing to screen or printer, screen cleanup and trash. Overall speed of the system is increased, and JiffyDOS even extracts bugs in Commodore's operating system. Installation is relatively simple and requires no soldering (but do take care as this will void existing warranties). There's even a built-in file copier.



Just when you thought the C64 had lost all support, along comes the World of Commodore Show. Shown above is JiffyDOS — more commands and more memory.

## KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THE WORLD

It's exactly three years ago that American products first found a distributor over here. I went to its often worn waiting of directly to America for the latest computer goodies. Issue 22 (page 78) reviewed a queueing-to-ordering queue from America. Since then I believe waiting of any money.

**Free Spirit Software**  
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RAMLink is a hardware interface which plugs into the OGA cartridge port and allows for steady memory expansion. It includes the JiffyDOS kernel ROM, has a through-port for a second cartridge and its own power supply. MasterLink OGA powers up immediately and supports all Commodore DOS commands. A creditable 80% compatibility with software is claimed.

On the software end, also for the 64, is the improved GoodDisk v2.5.5 (WIMP) Windows, Icon, Mouse, Pull-down menu facilities are now totally built into the host environment, with all the window facilities of higher-end machines. Special programs designed for the system include GoodPaint, a high-resolution graphics editor; GoodEdit and GoodTools for the editing graphics. The CIBS is well-suited to, with extra power on hard commands.

## Say what you mean

Also being shown is Barry Beer's Talker 64. This is a talking version of their Write Stuff word processing program, using the RAMLink Automated Mouse program made popular in the 64bit Mail many years ago. Nine user-definable voices combine with help menus. Written originally for educators and the handicapped, its features make it valuable to everyone.

How about a hard drive for that 64? Creative's HD series use 3.5-inch technology and connects through the 64's serial bus. AmigaLink sets 20 or 40 megabytes, even 640k drives will connect as well. It's also possible to take the drive with you should you decide to upgrade. JiffyDOS improves performance, as does hooking the drive through RAMLink. The hard drive operating system is stored in ROM for quicker access, and comes with a set of tools that enable up to 16 partitions, directories and sub-directories. Special



Just what you need when popping down to your local Victoria film. This, based on the film's HyperCard system, works on any Amiga with at least one megabyte of main memory, connects with a type three Laser Disk to help you through the troubling Christmas period.

Operating modes are built-in for compatibility with GEOS and CPMS.

Of course you'd expect hardware for the Amiga to be pretty astounding, and this won't disappoint you. It's a hardware product which allows flexible cable storage of all sorts of information to be accessed in a random file, direct map, linear, sparse, fixed map, HyperCard for movie time new, but they don't get so good and sound like as Amiga owners old building stacks in easy and totally convenient. Where it gets off to is interfacing the program with a laser player (drive via a special connector), this will play only on a one-megabyte system, but requires some three megabytes to properly be used for creating programs. Check out the included Laser Link Guide, by the way. Great sound effects and lots of appropriate pictures (too bad some of the settings are beyond TQM's budget).

Level three amazing is Future Touch's Touch Screen. Use it with Visa, or other the included software to work with other programs. A special screen is placed inside the monitor case and in front of the picture tube. This screen is then touch sensitive, and responds to your finger as if moved around by a mouse. Professional applications are abundant: choosing music videos in shops, shopping mail information, etc. It really makes the Amiga a real machine. It's far from cheap (around £200), but you can buy it already inside an 80486 monitor which helps to keep the pain of the price down.

On the arcade end, try Dr. Plummer's House of Ills (MicroIllusions), a game billed as being of low-gravity and high action. It's basically appeared from America's space ship, Lunar Lander (gravity effects pulling at you) and a maze game. 28 levels and humorous screens are spread over four selectable missions. Full of fighting aliens and the best, unpredictable forces of Dr.

Plummer's fortress.

The low calls expose the late-state electronic puzzle. Amiga notwithstanding, there's a lot of fun to be had using this one, a two-player program to mix up off-pieces. Any low-level picture, with up to 10-seconds, can be used. The program then handles up the picture according to your choice of complication. This ranges from as few as four pieces to ten (200) (by and part that one out). The mouse is placed over the piece to move and a click sends that particular piece to the blank spot. A difficult level can both assemble and rotate the pieces, which makes it VERY hard. Meanwhile, a timer is counting down.

Japan includes built-in help screens, and a percentage chart that shows how well you are doing. The program will also print out the screen at any time.

## Sick disks?

Free Spirit's Amis is a useful Amiga alignment utility of value to everyone who has wondered just what is going on in their floppy disks when it chomps away the disks. Four functions make up the heart of the program — with everything being done in one master screen. The test sections include an automatic alignment function which checks the various tracks, and a drive motor speed option for determining the actual rpm, and condition of the disk in relationship to the drive. Not easy to operate, Amis can be installed on hard disk and comes with a specially formatted disk to use for comparisons.

Also from Free Spirit comes their trilogy of sub-rated sort of test educational games, including many games. It starts Captain Rebel Station in each title as the Viewers from Space and Planet of Lost. The latest is come in Bridge of the Planet — in which you must save Miss Galaxy from a two-megabyte. Each features an interactive mouse-driven icon bar at the bottom of the screen, which is also where you type in commands. The main screen displays the view of hand icons, no digitized stuff, just 3D-value low-res graphics. It's a bit naughty, but not terrible so. Music adds to the fun, and the pointer icon is a very cute little hand that moves in a few little increments of its own time and then.

Okay, we've had enough. Wrapping our purchases inside of a large Leisure Pro Larry beam towel, we head out, back to the elevator and up to the restaurant. Amiga or not, you GOTTA eat sometimes!



Hundreds of new games were on show at the latest American gathering of Commodore groups. Shown above is Roger Wilco's last set adventure in Sierra's Space Quest 3.

# TINTIN ON THE MOON



"Hello control station! Here is the moon rocket. Tintin speaking. I have just regained consciousness. Everything seems OK, we are now taking over the controls of the rocket." Aboard the rocket, you will relive with Tintin and his friends the most exciting adventure the

world has ever known. The first trip to the Moon!

Will you succeed in piloting the red and white rocket through space and achieve a flawless landing? Will you capture Colonel Bobo, the traitor, who wants to make the expedition fail? Will you be able to find the anti-gravity to put out the fire, even while floating in zero-gravity (which isn't everybody's idea of fun)? Will you succeed in floating and disarming the bombs and freeing your companions in order to get out of the rocket to make the first step on the Moon? You will discover all this by playing "TINTIN ON THE MOON", the first computer game based on the comic books by Hergé...

Before launching there was Tintin and... may be you!



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INFOGRADES



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# READERPAGE

## Porn or TGM?

Dear TGM

An increasingly common and disturbing perception has compelled me to write. In the days, people hope that action may be taken by those in a position of power to rectify this most serious and distasteful (see, DADA-FOUR) situation.

I am, of course, referring to the battle of Italy as Internet computer entertainment. The wicked (and, indeed, pleasant) of our beloved computer usage directly adjacent to publications of a pornographic nature.

Whilst going toward the upper shelves seeking my favourite publications (that's TGM, we presume?), my hands and eyes may wander precariously in the vicinity of that devil's work referred to above.

Naturally if I find that TGM is not yet released, I deposit empty-handed, leaving the obligatory female assistant (always with others present) to doubt thinking that I have lost my nerve at the last moment by not diving for the porno stuff.

Whilst I do not wish to be acknowledged as a rampant

pervert, I am quite ready to acknowledge that a similar representation to the prospect of being treated a computer gaming environment when their eyes inadvertently stray to such further images.

Of course, the solution to this problem, in written and very graphic (NB I have more than one) group should emerge, globally ignore any plan. The cure is, of course, worldwide universal TGM subscriptions NOW (Or Weekly like Monthly (WEM) depending upon personal preference.)

MA Humphreys, Bakersfield

Things is, though, who should get placed next to the porno stuff? Your brother, perhaps.

## Death to Xenites!

Dear TGM

On Wednesday the 13th of October, at precisely 5:00pm, my house was finally at rest. I consciously moved towards the computer to leave the last click. This time, there seems to be no interruptions, this time the Xenites were going to die.

The above points into xenite action, in future columns. **JOE (Joe Anger too), North Shotts**

No, good point. However, as the IT and Amiga are relatively young in the computer market (compared to the good old Spectrum), it's very hard to judge the full capabilities of the machine and whether they're being exploited to the full.

But we do agree that the Amiga is probably the most under-utilised machine of the two. The old ST and Amiga versions of Ben Mee's get started because they don't push their best machines as far as the Spectrum game? Surely not, playability is what counts. That comes a far longer weighting when reviewing software in the TGM office.

## My dad won't let me!!!

Dear TGM

I would like an Amiga 500 for Christmas, but my dad says no. In the obvious reason — they're too cheap. So, I said I would save up £150 and pay some towards it, but still no. Then he said I had a budget of £150, so I mentioned the PC Engine and Sega Mega Drive. I think the problem with these computers is that the games are too cheap. But then he thinks that these computers will get messed up with software, like the old Atari did a few years ago, and that computers and software prices will go down shortly. If Amiga goes down in price he won't Christmas, I could get one. What do you think? I own a Commodore Plus4. I have a Compaq, London PD. I will need the Amiga games, please. PS: My dad thinks I should get a G4.

Well, we'd all love an Amiga, but sometimes we have to

think of what we can afford. If your budget's only £150, then you're severely limiting yourself to old stock. Although some PC Engines are available for sub-£150, we'd be very reluctant before recommending such an option. Even if you do buy one through an independent if you can afford the software. The Sega Mega Drive is to be released officially by Virgin Mastertronic in summer '93, so you'd want to then to buy any Sega machine (software prices may also stabilize then). OK, although good in their day, are a bit short now — and software is definitely dying up. Not recommended.

So (trying to know what to say, really) how about saving up a bit more money to get the Amiga, CD-player, etc, and getting an Amiga in the middle of next year when they'll make changes in price as more things are part of a better bundle. If you can wait till next Christmas then okay.

As it turned out, everything went smoothly to plan. I even had two letters by the time I came to the last end-of-level question. I was cool, confident and collected. Billy Joel's latest was played loudly in the background and the final confusion was longer.

It was a piece of cake. He had no doubts against this last one, bullets that were bigger than my ship, two shields and enough power-ups to supply the national grid. In fact, my money was so big I even felt sorry for him.

Well, the reason I wrote in is that I wanted to know if I was the first person to finish *Race 2*. If not, how many more before me. All I ask is for anyone who has finished it to write to the address below. To prove they have finished it, could they send a quick summary of what happens at the end.

Just one more thing, in answer to the question at the end, I can say that the game was most definitely good enough.

Jonathan Khan, IT 91 Catherine's Road, Boreham, Essex EN15 7LD. Listening to Billy Joel while

playing seems to do the trick for us too. However, thoughts such as 'I even felt sorry for him' will do you good in games like *Shadow of the Beast* or *Arctura*.

## The ultimate games machine?

Dear TGM

Here's a little question for you and all your readers. What is the best home games computer?

The answer is obvious — it is the one with the best games! There is another question, what computer has a game which has fully-animated, realistic, and light effects/objects? Not to mention a simulated galaxy 1000 light years across containing 2000 stars systems. A spacecraft with 'stepped

## TGM, you're nicked

Dear TGM

When given, you gave the Spectrum version of APB a better review than the IT version. Do you say 'the Spectrum version makes better use of that machine's capabilities'.

Now I understand this, as it is also my opinion that the use of computers should be taken into account when reviewing software. So why the letter you sent, that, when reviewing IT's Amiga version of a game why don't the above criteria not come into play? Surely the IT version of *Breaker and Racer II*, and quite a lot of the other software you review for both machines, is making better use of the ST's hardware.

Come on guys! It's applies to Spectrum/ST games it must apply to IT/Amiga games, or the we talking double standards? I do hope that you take



unofficial master" transmission that told a Master Transceiver Teletext System. (No thank!)

This game is obviously the best around, the computer that runs it must therefore be the best home-games computer around. But this computer is not the Amiga or the ST (Pardon?) The price of this computer (which is infinitely better than the ST and Amiga) is only £1849+VAT and it runs BBC BASIC. If you can't guess what it is from now then you don't deserve to know what it is: the Archimedes 43000.

Being a top dog makes the ST and the Amiga (18 times quicker) and having a minimum of 10MB of memory, this above game is only the beginning.

So, TGM, if you do not review the game or any other Amiga game you are not going to be bringing to your title.

**Howard May, High Wycombe**

BT: Commenting this to the Amiga or ST will do like trying to convert South (any) Island

or Conquest (both originally written on the Am) to the 43000.

Archimedes coverage in TGM is certainly going to increase, however, we believe the last date is only small at the moment, therefore, so's the coverage. For the few Archimedes review just in reference those for Amiga/ST. And where can we get hold of this mega game? We're dying to play it.

## RISCy business II

Dear TGM

Thanks for your feature on the Archimedes. I hope they will continue and become more numerous.

I'd like to contact you on a

few things and also put forward my point of view. I have a BBC B but shortly intend to buy an A3000 which, as you said, is actually very good value. Subsequently, I've followed the Amiga situation closely.

a) Cambridge International Software actually produce a TV calculator for the A3000, which I believe is free when you buy the computer from them. Also they are releasing 3D Amiga games for Christmas, including clones of *Out Run*, *Afterburner* and *Dragon's Lair II* (not to mention an Amiga Construction Kit).

b) Conquest was written by Jonathan Griffiths (and obviously used a member of David Jackson's staff).

c) Balls is the best game I've seen on any computer but only available on the Beek and Electron.

d) Clones have produced some games, though they might like to target the last two.

e) Jason did, in fact, produce an Amiga development machine which was supplied to a number of companies prior to the release of the A3000. They also sold a few for £4000.

However, the articles were excellent and contained some good points which I'll like to expand on. The A3000 should be the ultimate games machine, after all South took just half a year in a high-level language — the thing is now standard. Games like *Interceptor*, *Hard Drive*, running at less than 15-bit speed, and *Exotic* (as this the mega game) could well sell more A3000s and hence open a new market for software houses.

I was optimistic about the major software houses being supported by the machine, but none of them seem to be answering Grand Slam's call to half stop by producing the *Mania* and *Portman* (but can they really be surprised that not many sold? They were released long before the

# A case of neglect

Dear TGM

It's summer sleep time. No, it's not, it's Christmas. Didn't anyone tell you? So, why is there is hardly any software to review do you put nice game reviews into new papers and few of them in this and what? I think that most of them are not top-quality but the reviews of *Quartz* and *Galaxy Force II* both get over 80% easily justifying a column, full-page review. These games in the main reviews get less than both these games. Just because these games are big business doesn't mean they are going to be good, as indicated in your reviews. So in such cases you should neglect these games. If you have to neglect any at all, instead of the games which get the high scores.

Also, I agree with 8-bit owners that they are being neglected in your magazine. In issue 12, Amiga and ST games reviewed are twice as many as that of the 8-bit, looking at the previous games and articles in your magazine will justify this, too. Oh and I own a 16-bit.

**Neil Robinson, Portsmouth**

To be honest with you, I can't see what you're going to do about it. As a 16-bit owner you're competing from all this "wonder" 8-bit software.

The Software News section of TGM is a strange beast.

'Just because these games are big businesses doesn't mean they are going to be good... So, in such cases, you should neglect these games...'

...writes Neil Robinson of Portsmouth about the TGM policy of ignoring some games and concentrating on mass-marketed software — even when it's terrible. The 16-bit owner is also annoyed at the neglect of 8-bit owners. Why? Read on. Neil wins himself £50-worth of software for the TGM Star Letter this month. Air your views and write to: **Readerspage, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY7 1DB.**



involved and there are a number of means why software might look better. In life there, games that are low quality have relatively low user interest or use base, that we're late reviewing (though not or review are late to give a full review games only comparable on one format... Specifically *Galaxy Force II* on the Sega, a new machine in comparison to the popular 8- and 16-bit con-

sumers, and there is little significant gain in the game with sophisticated gameplay — just shape and map. Other than new base, similar things can be said for *Quartz*. Plot is unexciting and gameplay is simple shoot 'em up.

Big business software may seem like working out hard-earned money when successful in a poor case deserve to add on much review atten-

tion as good ones, to every people? Of — we have to help you do for the more attention, the games were photographed in colour but technical difficulties (always a good review) prevented us from including them (someone but them, in other words).

Please also remember that as part of a string of magazine or magazine from *Newsflash*, TGM sees every single piece of software for the major computers. What most people don't realise is that 8-bit is 50/50. Low and new products are being produced for the Spectrum in particular (just take a look at any Spectrum shop to prove the point). 16-bit reviews of games are usually limited first, as they normally feature in the final review.

The following conventions are then reviewed in updates. If there are more 8-bit software around we'll review it. Reviews on TGM come on 8-bit machine (C64 and Spectrum), as it's not that we ignore them intentionally TGM's policy is to review anything and everything to do with computers — it just that the 16-bit market is now more active than the 8-bit. If you have an 8-bit magazine, you'll find out few reviews and lots of information for the reader because there's little else to write about.

However, on a brighter note, look at the *Word of Construction* (see report on page 47 for some very interesting developments) on the C64.





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# The Games machine

## READER CLASSIFIEDS

### FOR SALE

For sale Sega Super system, 2 control pads, rapid fire pad, 1 light Phaser, 50 games plus 7 top games. Excellent condition, 4 months old worth £400, sell £180! Interested? Then phone (01) 884 1844 after 4pm. It's a bargain!

PC Engine for sale. Includes 5 games: R-Type, Dungeon Explorer, Alien Crush, Outrage II, Rescue Hammer. PAL Converter. Worth £415, sell for £250. Phone Christopher on 0252 688102. What a bargain!

Atari 520 STFM, one Meg drive, boxed as new, £200 software, 3 joysticks, 50 blank disks, disk box, mouse, mouse mat, books, maps. Worth over £800, sell for £295. Phone James on 0955 21204.

Atari STFM 1/2 Meg, over 200 pounds of wide ranging games. Will sell for £100 - £150 quick sale. Telephone now on 01 274 5154 after 4.30pm, ask for Simon. Will swap for a second hand Amiga on its own.

MSX for sale. 10K-10 computer, disk recorder, £200 worth of games joystick, track & drive. £1000. If £150, buyer must collect if not in Birmingham area. Can be seen working. Tel: 021 568 8352.

Sega system for sale with two joysticks, maps and 11 games which include Alien Breed, Double Dragon, Thunder Blasts, Shinobi and Alien Syndrome. £150 only. Tel: 081 655 1762. Ask for David.

Sega games for sale £7 to £13. Please for James LA 07438 775802 or write to 115 Hutton Avenue, Shirley, Southampton SO2 1AD. 180 games for sale like Rampage, King of the Hill, Pro Wrestling, BlackBet, Alien

Beast & Time Soldiers.

Sega system, including light Phaser, two joysticks, six games: R-Type, Asterix II, Double Dragon, Outrage II, Jaxxon, Island Dr. and Super Hunt. Worth £220, sell for only £115 only. Absolutely mint condition. Fully boxed. Phone (0784) 873805. Quick sale please!

Sega system with R.U.U. and 7 games inc. Kamenheit and Castles Games, 10 months old. Worth £200, sell for £165. Call Owen (0535) 803884 after 4pm.

Atari 520STFM, 6550 worth of games and accessories, all top games inc. Kamenheit and Castles Games, 10 months old. Worth £200, sell for £165. Call Owen (0535) 803884 after 4pm.

Clm, two tape decks, joystick, reset padlock, backup board, £600 of original software (phone for list), 64Kbaa image, assembly-language book. All for £160 plus env. Phone Paul on 054 4544055. Anytime!

Sega system, boxed as new, includes nine games such as Outrun, Space Harrier, Thunder Blasts, Fantasy Zone II etc., three joysticks. Sell for £200 or offers. Phone Karl on (0842) 871458.

Atari ST originals for sale. List includes Falcon, Ballistics, Robocop, Blood Money, Intersect, Rocket Harrier, Honda RVP and lots more. £5 max per game. Send SAE to Robert Duff, 41 Albert Road, Chislehurst, Kent DA1 3NG.

Arcade machines. Full size stand up games. Scorpion £140, Pac-Man £150, Scorpion £150, Asteroids £200, Defender £250, Subtron £260. Return of Jack

£480. Others. Also some small boards. Mean Point £75, Karate Champ £100. More. Tel. Steve on (0495) 62744.

Atari 520 STFM, with over £500 of software, plus most issues of ST Action, £250. Phone Les on 781 8241. Only sellers in Greater Manchester area.

Atari STFM, only 3 months old, boxed as new, all of the latest titles: Robocop, Batman, Lili II, Lombard PAC. Fully boxed and includes spare disk with plenty more other games. Only £260 (£150 drive). Phone (01) 7718008 after 5pm week days. Ask for Maurice.

PC Engine console for sale. Sell boxed and includes the games Vigilante, R-Type, Pac-Land. All for £200 only. Please let Mark on Wolverhampton 55430 after 4pm. Thank

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Sega games to swap if sell. Titles include: After Burner, Fantasy Zone II, Secret Command, Action Fighter, Gunstar, Zillion, Jeti Hero, Wrestle, Power Strike, Asterix II, Fantasy, Rampage, Time Soldiers, Power Wayne on Birmingham 350-1621.

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Amiga contacts wanted from anywhere in the world. 100% reply fast. Send for etc. Beginner welcome. Write to Craig, 21 Whitby Drive, Blackburn, Lancs. BB2 3EH, England. Don't delay, write now.

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# THE SEARCH FOR CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

## Part One

**It's November as you first see this *Illustrated page* and no doubt your only thoughts of Christmas thus far are "What the hell am I going to buy everyone?" But let me take you now, dear reader, to Christmas Day itself and the TGM office, where the Yuletide spirit is veritably overflowing... Well, almost**

**S**carecrows were subtly cluttering the floor, forming an over-the-top-thick blanket of white. It was, a gentle, almost soothing scene. The fact that this was October and the roof was in at least a reasonable state of repair spoiled the image somewhat. Robin was desperately grasping handfuls of polystyrene chips from a large discolored bag and heaving them into the box. The "scarecrows" gathered around his chair and the messy magazines, Tropic magazines and press releases strewn around it. He sighed, growled, and tore a strip off his hair, throwing what remained of it awkwardly over his shoulder. He hit the piece of mulch, scrambled it up into a ball, frowned, unsatisfied it, hastily attempted to make an original idea. There was it, then discarded it. Too. He was more than a little bored and so frustrated as a Halloween visit, they looked worse.

Domino, looking polystyrene from his shoulders, wasn't exactly bawling into missing rhombuses of The Laughing Policeman and The New New Girl (the Girl, either). He guy stands that long over Loflow, and the hapless into that dampness it, went some way to explaining why the latter thing didn't spring readily to mind. But even assuming the soggy weather (it was prone to leap and then the old ladies for "time piece" all "Washed" "respired" feelings were low in the TGM office.

It had been a group decision

that they meet there before going to the Newfound Christmas party and one that Warren, sitting in a corner, adamantly holding with his long girl hair (his hair had had difficulty holding the boy at first but was coming along nicely), repeated agreeing to. It just didn't seem like Christmas and all the difficulty and instant commensality of finding gifts for relatives was an aggravation that had depressed them all.

Hanging around in the office, where they shared five days a week — at least presented to — was not helping matters one little bit. They were waiting for a little (though animated) exchange to show up and the time was slipping by, despite severely forcing my inclination toward intransigence.

With the kind of order you experience on finding a toilet or milk bottle after drinking several pints of intoxicating beverage, they all heard the rhythmic jangling of rattled pockets and heavy footsteps on the staircase. There was a muffled loud thump rapidly followed by loud language, then after a few moments peace the steps resumed their pounding.

"Hi-Oh, it's me!" Mark burst into the office, a tall, imposing figure that would've made Norm Baroff line-shouldered with confidence. "Was everyone but me of size present? I've got a fantastic mail-distribution digital watch!" — he waved an arm to display a device the size of a small encyclopedia — "Assured a CD player and some videos and a few CDs for the player and books and other

stuff and it!" Mark clearly wasn't in the same merry, unliking mood that everyone else was.

"Yes yes, Mark, but where're you from?" Domino questioned in the sobering authoritative voice that he's so good at. "Lunch."

"That there's gonna be loads of food at the party," Robin exclaimed, "and we've been here for hours. Go."

"Good good good good!" Mark glanced heavily. "Let's be off, then!"

Robin couldn't bear to be parted from his beloved squinting nose sample and his older, not-really-boyfriend and pushed them both up in 40 minutes. Jilly hup, while Warren wrapped a tennis racket to each foot in case of sudden break according British weather can be a strange and powerful thing. Then of they sat, giggling, to the end of the road, perhaps... but most probably to noisy roads, sitting on the stairs and wishing they hadn't been there. Christmas hadn't been turned out, and writing letters to Simon Bates '80 Time.

Robin, Don and Warren were reluctant to leave the house, but the other guests of a Christmas party and so diverted the journey for a final ritual visit to the Victoria Wine shop downstairs. It was thoughtfully staffed, especially on an otherwise national holiday, for the festive trade gained from the TGM crew, and also for the convenience of this address (working up to orange, Bitter, Bitter, Cane, Caravan, Fins, Hops, whisky, Peated, molasses, honey and blackberry, they loaded all their goodies into a few trolleys, carefully noting receipts as long as tape measures to later use to claim back the money on expenses.

Tying all the trolleys together, so that connecting the lead vehicle to a trailer became strapped and tied around Warren. ("I'm not into this sort of thing, honey"), it was off to the end part of rail — Damp.

**It. DO. NOT. MY mistake —**  
Widowhood.

It was with some constancy that they arrived there, as it's pretty difficult to get a grip on a damp pavement, when, retaining loose socks and pulling three heavy trolleys — I'm sure you all know this from experience. Typically, their square main department hadn't got any new CDs either than "Newfound Longitude" but that Warren could afford them party shiny discs, designed to a suit the atmosphere and mood, and the lady multi-colored lined, herring and stars that so "carefully" dressed the show floor then to leave quickly and empty-handed. Just as well considering that, under Y's Wine, they didn't offer a special Christmas Day "We're here to help" service and so many beds were flapping irritatingly all around them.

They quickly made their way to the party, held at Roger's house, partly because they could hear police sirens and partly because the journey was downhill so Warren had difficulty travelling at anything less than 5 mph.

Outside the house, complete with Mac, I contemplated close but, Warren looked a little pale and worried, pretty much as usual, really so no-one was worried and paid little attention. But when he collapsed onto the lawn, screaming, biting, coughing and reciting passages from the Bible, no-one was worried and paid little attention.

But what was that? A squint, almost object-crawling out of his left control. It was dark, it was rainy, it was evil. It had an Arctic Computing subscription. It was —

AAAAAAACCCCC

What is the creature? What will happen at the Christy Stage? Will Robin, Don and Warren ever find the Xmas spirit? What is the capital of Albania? How many beans make five? Who pays this credit to write this garbage?

**FIND OUT NEXT MONTH!**



# THALAMUS



A DEAD MAN'S  
KILLING JOKE...



By Rob Stevens



The *Snare* is a turn-based deadly maze built in a temporal cavity by brilliant Andre Tholmas who ten years ago entered his creation with his most valued possession — and died.

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# PBM UPDATE

## John R Woods catches up on all the latest happenings in the Play By Mail world



**Single**, from **Warren Games**, provides a battle between two lions. The game is set in medieval Britain, where a fortification is under siege—but help is on its way. The two adversaries have eight weeks (turns) to reach a conclusion before the relief force arrives.

The game is played on a battlefield of 100 squares, where you not only control an army of soldiers, but also blacksmiths, mercenaries, slaves, peasants, etc. All who will help you through the sieges measure include tunneling, farming, and tending to the injured. The winner of each game receives a rank point which allows them to progress to a higher level of combat.

Payment can either be in the form of a \$12 answer for setup and the eight turns, or \$3 for the rulebook and first two turns with further at \$1.50. Each turn you'll receive a detailed map and analysis.

**Warren Games** have gained numerous awards for their role-playing game *Calista*. They've now taken the step into computer-mediated play with *Armed Arena*—a futuristic fight played in a 3-D space. Each player controls a team of up to five avatars with which strategic, tactical and diplomatic skills can lead to victory. The universe comes in an attractive envelope and contains excellent artwork throughout. Rulesets for the game are FREE to TGM readers—just send a \$10 stamp together with your name and address. Further turns cost a very reasonable \$1.50, with no hidden extras.

**Warlord**, from **K&J**, takes place on a devastated earth, where mankind survives in underground bunkers. As the timeclocks count, so the people emerge into the bright new world, ready to war again (some people never learn). *Warlord* is fully computer-mediated and has a total of 100 players battling for supremacy. To win, you must capture a 99% of all the surviving cities, not an easy task when everyone else is trying to do the same. Starter

packs cost £2.50 (including three turns) with further turns at £1.25.

Another interesting development at **K&J** is a PBM phone line. The line gives information on all of their games, and could be particularly useful in the event of isolated postal strikes. Calls are the usual 22p (off-peak) plus a small charge, so you don't spend too long on the line. The number is 0800 550071.

### COMPANY PROFILE: GAD Games

Each month I'll focus on one company, looking at their range. This month it's the turn of **GAD Games**. **GAD** have been in the business professionally for around two years. The company started out running an amateur game called *Island of Chaos*; a role-playing game, set in a fantasy world. After this had been running successfully for some years, **Dean Gwynn**, the sole GM, relaunched the game professionally, using the wealth of background and images that had been created.

A little time later, they bought the rights to an existing game, *Island Supreme* (from **Amherst Sports**, at around £750). Since taking on the game, many improvements and changes have been made. The next step was to take over a little known amateur game, *Invitation*. The game is very similar to the boardgame *Risk*, relying on simple strategy and not-too-simple diplomacy.

The third game also came from a small amateur company, run by **Darren Cook**. The game, *Rat Racing*, puts the player in the driving seat of a mean machine, with race reports giving a full commentary. The final addition to **GAD Games'** line is *Megalomaniacs*, a complex wargame run under licence from **Coch**, **Holloway** and **Co**. *Megalomaniacs* commences soon.

For further information on any of the above games send for the free eight-page leaflet.

### Two-handed gaming

Two-handed gaming (2H) is similar to the party game where one player starts a story and then the next player must continue the plot. It is played between two players, who each control one main character, and any number of subsidiary char-

acters. Each character should be as detailed as possible, and 'played' rather than moved like an object. Each turn you deal a story to the two characters being the ending of it, and then send this on to the second player who continues the plot. There are several guidelines to help successful play, and it is hoped that you'll be able to add more as you progress...

1) The story should be told from your character's point of view—what he/she sees and hears.  
2) Where possible, try not to manipulate the other player's main character. Also, control between the main characters is near impossible as there is no 'system' as such. Of course a system could be developed if so desired.

3) On the first turn, the starting character will need to allow the entrance of the other player's character. This should be left as open as possible. For example: 'I'm out from the corner store, as opposed to, is it too tall for an elderly woman with a cane on my left cheek walks up and says no'.

4) Hooks should be introduced as often as possible. This can be in the form of mysterious objects or events. It is usual to leave the story on a cliffhanger each turn, so to see if the other player will get out of it.  
5) Be consistent, and try not to contradict yourself. This requires careful note-taking.

The sounds continue, so I've given a shortened sample of the first turn in a game I was playing.

**Bearmy** comes from the ancient, and distant planet of **Aurora**. He is roughly humanoid in shape, with the addition of antennae sticking out from his head. Despite the similar looks, the **Moutons** are very different from humans. For started they have strange mental powers, and secondly they think it strange and often badly random paths, which they call 'logic'... This is **Bearmy's** story...

'Maps—well, computer, where are we then?'  
'There was no reply—not surprising, really, as **Bearmy** was in the middle of a doze, with nothing around him for at least three days—maps. **Bearmy** scratched his head, trying to remember where he was. Ah, the party' he

exclaimed to himself, and burst into giggles. He quickly stopped when a large elephant appeared before him.

'Hello **Bearmy**,' said the elephant. 'You were good last night. **Bearmy** began to snort and breathe. 'No, surely I wasn't that drunk. Please not'.

The elephant gave an impatient grin. **Bearmy's** antennae began to twitch, urgently trying to pick up a signal from a passing inter-universe bus... DAMN, they were never on time. Just as the elephant had gently tapped his trunk around **Bearmy's** face, he entered. **Bearmy** picked up what they were after, and he began to snort. The poor elephant was called three seconds later when an underground volcano erupted beneath him.

**Bearmy** reappeared in a 'natural' corridor, its called 'natural' corridors every attempt has been made to make it not look like a totally natural of a large inter-universe bus.

'Where the hell are we going, computer?' **Bearmy** asked out. 'Well I don't know, and don't call the computer,' said a voice. Then, from around the corner, he walked.

(Second player: **Daniel Keane**)

'I walked a nine-hour dwarf 14... I think, remember me?' said the walking ball of green jelly. 'It's your old friend **Wormy** again.'

**Bearmy**, 'I'll lay it on the line—I need your help. I have lost all capability in the you-know-what department. I know you can help me—I heard about you and the elephant last night.' **Bearmy** was dumbfounded...

'You 2H world can, of course, be a bit more serious if you so desire. Perhaps a good starting game would be in a familiar fantasy-type background. I'll be featuring more alternative ways to PBM in future issues, so stay tuned...

### CONTACTS

**Warren Games**, 95 Juniper, Birch Hill, Broomfield, Berkshire RG10 4DS.  
**Terium Games** (20M) OFFICE, 21 High Street, Revellon, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO13 0EH.  
**K&J Games**, PO Box 71, Cleveleys, Blackpool, Lancashire FY5 2UL.  
**GAD Games**, Warlord House, Fought, Carmarthen SA31 3BL.

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LATEST RELEASES



# The ADVENTURE STRATEGY ROLEPLAY Column

**OS4 (also PC, Amiga, ST)  
Etha**

## TANGLED TALES

**Origin/Mindscape**

Fairlie, your master, is not a happy wizard. Due to your habit of getting things wrong he has wiped your spellbook clean. However, Etashah has given you a chance to make amends. This leads to three separate, but connected, adventures.

Unlike other RPGs, Tangled Tales (TT) liberally punishes the heck to death applied to one side. It's good to see that successful combat only provides cash. Your attributes are improved when you complete the miniquests. This is a much more preferable method of improving your character.

TT also attempts to positively use characters/PCs. There are several occasions where you need specific party characters to solve puzzles. However, sometimes this has been taken too far, where exactly the right people are needed at the right time for specific problems. Other means of solving the problem should have been introduced.



The combat routines, magic and character creation are kept relatively simple.

Graphics match the quality of the narration. When you wish to talk to someone, their picture will appear onscreen and a menu of topics will be listed for your selection. The interface is well designed, using icons and single keystrokes.

I got the impression that Origin have used TT as a vehicle to test a range of new and interesting ideas. Some of which don't quite work, like the NPC dialogue tree. However, Origin are clearly all the right direction here. Characters aside, though, I can heartily recommend TT as an innovative and, above all, fun RPG.



## Infocom

Well, mas broses, have I got news for you! If you remember my recent Infocom report, I mentioned that Elizabeth Langway (not Langway as reported — sorry Elizabeth!) — who wrote two of the Infocom stories — was one of the few developers to make the trip to Mindscape during the Infocom re-shuffle, and that she was currently working on a secret project. I can now reveal that, along with David Langway (a graphic artist who worked on some of the recent Infocom adventures), Elizabeth is developing an Apple Mac HyperCard adventure. Mindscape's Joe Ybema commented that the highly-regarded Marlene and Course Demos have been little more than 'expository toys'. The new Infocom game will be more of an 'adventure'. A clue to the future direction of Infocom's products was given when Ybema stated that: 'We cannot continue in the marketplace listing of products that take eight hours to learn to play well, and up to 200 hours to complete.'

You may have noticed that Origin products have been fairly scarce of late. However, I sense that Origin have split with MicroProse, their UK distributor. However, things should get back to normal pretty soon, because a new deal has been struck with Mindscape. To see what Origin have got lined up for your destination take a look at the exclusive reviews of three of their latest: taking official exclusives, you may have noticed my exclusive review of *Night & Magic II*. Now where has that one been all this time, ah? Well, New World Computing, the company behind *Mist II*, have split with their distributors, Activision. They have now found a new home with Electronic Arts in the States (along with Lucasfilm, incidentally), however, the UK arm of EA still isn't quite sure what's happening.

**PC £39.50 (also OS4)**

## MIGHT & MAGIC II

**New World Computing**

In *Might & Magic II* you control a party of characters in an effort to save the land of Creth. You see, awful things have been happening in Creth, at last. It's your job to find out what's been causing them.

Graphics are improved but they still manage to convey an almost cartoonish atmosphere. Monster portraits are now animated, character classes have been modified with a couple of additions and the game introduces feelings. The latter can join and help the party, but they must be paid and equipped.

An interesting additional feature is the introduction of secondary skills. So each party character can now have two skills instead of just 'level' or whatever. While you're playing, you are able to alter the difficulty of the game (from inconspicuous to Thrill-Seeker) which alters the frequency of encounters and so on. The engine is quite novel, too.

However, criticisms do arise. The most serious being the useless introduction of

# developing new HyperCard game!

coming to it in Britain.

Right, it's a long time. It's official: Level 5, an offshoot of their old Supergame adventures, will not be producing any more textographic adventures. They will now be concentrating on the new HUGO system (which Universal Games Engine), which I reckon will be something akin to SimCity games. Pete Austin reported that "People have been decrying the death of the adventure market for years, so Supergame is an appropriate final release. It comes even beyond the grave..."

People? Who are these 'people' that Pete refers to? Could they, by any chance, be professional journalists who have never actually played an adventure, never mind looked over it? The same people who, when my new idea arrived on the scene, promptly declared everything else as only being suitable for the 'book' level? It is certain that these individuals have the loudest voice over the magazines they write for. Could it be these voices that Pete fears?

Many, many true adventures will not agree with Pete Austin's opinion. I believe that there is still room in the market for the textographic adventure. Don't believe me? Look at House of Shadow, the new adventure/RPG from Electronic Arts. Artists have shown, along with illustrations, that such adventures have not yet been fully exploited. I'm amazed at the people who had House of Shadow as some new phenomenon. Take another look! Elisha there just takes the adventure a stage further (and from what I've seen, a marketing game this is going to be, too). What surprises me, though, is that Level 5 has put so much time and effort into developing their adventures (interactive handling and so on), but they are now prepared to drop the whole idea. One thing's for sure, Level

5's decision to dedicate future releases to 16-bit only will leave a great deal of disappointed and angry 3-bit owners feeling like the star has been slammed in their faces. After all, of course, it has. So this is progress.

HUGO will include digitised sounds, multi-directional scrolling, fast animation, flexible sprites and sprite parking. Mike Austin commented that it has — 100,000 lines of code and has taken ten man-years to develop.

Anybody make it down to the PC show? An instant sure for hyperactivity, isn't it? Well, I've sufficiently recovered to report that I was given a sneak preview of Intersplay's Dragon Wars, and very nice it looks too. My first view of the game, on Apple II version, reminded me of The Bard's Tale with an enlarged character portrait window displaying complex animation. Further inspection revealed a more intricate plot, a more genuine introduction to the game (you are not killed off in the first two minutes) — however for that, improved combat routines (although I must have liked to have seen further progression, hard) and improved attributes. A review will follow soon.

I also saw Electronic Arts' Keel The Thief in action. Your view being on the ground, through the character's eyes, is a The Bard's Tale. Combat is interesting as you are presented with a long thin window which shows your line of sight, in addition to an overhead view of the total combatants. Features include attacks from behind and ranged weapons. Interaction consists of clicking on characters present in the game window. It's also interesting as you must visit the correct ingredients to learn spells but you will need to read the reward books to know how to use them.

Other quick peaks included a demo of Leisure Suit Larry 3. The graphics look superb and the story looks suitably saucy. Also looking suitably saucy was Driven — Master of the Disk. Steve appears in Hammerite's new adventure, following on from Personal Nightmares. The 16-bit version of Leisure Squad looks very polished, too. In addition, I have received news that Softline are interested in Masterplay's Blue Stage series. I'll keep you posted with any further developments. Oh, I forgot to see the Amiga version of 004's Red Lightning hit the shelves any minute now and the C64 version of ERI's Sentinel Worlds should be with us in November (I'll add, this only along with William Gibson's Neuromancer on the PC).

Finally, one very strong rumour and a lot of gossip. First the gossip. Did you know that GFA's respected game designer, Garry Grippes, actually coded a custom version of his own game, Typhoon of Steel? Apparently a customer approached Garry and asked him if he would be so kind as to remove the 'Tutorial' routine from the game. He then paid him £100 for his trouble. But what of the rumour? You're going to laugh but I am, almost certain, that this rumour is true. Origin's Ultima IV, one of the largest, most in-depth and highly-rated RPGs the world has ever seen is being converted... to the Amiga. If this actually happens, and you just have to see the flamour of the Three Kingdoms review for support of this rumour, then the criterion of consoles only being suitable for arcade games will be worthless. Right, I'm off to clean this place up and put some linen on the shelves — Mashed potatoes, where's that cow?

Paul Pigby, TSM, PO Box 16, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DS.

PC £29.99, ST (also Amiga)  
£24.99

## INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE— THE GRAPHIC ADVENTURE

Lucasfilm/US Gold

Lucasfilm follow on from John Milius' own text adventure version of the Indiana Jones theme. The general appearance, user interface and method of play is similar to Zak. It is also just as enjoyable.

The basic storyline is that you must find the Holy Grail before the Nazis do, you must also rescue Henry Jones (your Dad) and cope with unpleasant dirty dealings in the process. The game uses the film to tell its themselves to the Grail legends so a new story has been built around it. A central object to the game is Henry Jones's Grail Diary which acts as a useful source of information as well as a subtle anti-piracy device.

Also, Indy offers moral commands and special code animations so that the characters perform the actions you ask them to. In addition, there are a variety of solutions to the puzzles in the game, so you don't

have to imitate Indy in the film.

Interaction is completely executed via a series of mouse clicks can be used to take you out of all sorts of situations. There is also an escape element in the form of firing beams which can be used when taking hits.

The magnificent graphics (which appear to have been filmed from drawings) for both



ST and PC are quite similar, with the obvious improvements in the ST's internal sound. Indy is an excellent game which achieves plenty of humour. Incidentally, the score in the Director's version truly deserves the title was actually cut out of the film but kept in the game! How about that for value for money!



C64 (also Amiga, ST, PC)  
Etha**OMEGA**  
Origin/Mindscape

Omega is a tank simulation with a difference. Not only do you have to design your tank, adding weapons and armor, but you must design it artificial intelligence (AI). It is the AI design that sets Omega apart from every other piece of future warfare on the market today. You actually have to program the AI. Via program As in BASIC, FOR, NEXT loops, etc. using the CyberTank Command Language (CCL). A series of pre-programmed modules are available for the novice.

Within the box are two disks, a 24-page User's Personal Orientation Guide, a 13-page Reference Guide and a whopping great 268-page CyberTank Engineer's Handbook.

You are an employee of The Organisation of Strategic Intelligence (OSI), a developer of military and law enforcement cybernetic applications. You work as an engineer assigned to a critical military contract called Omega.

Your job is to create the most powerful

|          |              |     |
|----------|--------------|-----|
| <b>S</b> | Presentation | 80% |
|          | AI           | 88% |
|          | Atmosphere   | 85% |
|          | Engagement   | 86% |
|          | System       | 87% |
|          | Overall      | 89% |

cybernetic tank possible within the budget available to you. You must design the tank's chassis, including its body, chassis, drive system, etc. When you have finally designed your tank you enter it into simulated automatic combat. If it performs well you get a bigger budget next time around. But will this be able to add more advanced equipment. New battlefields can be incorporated using the CTV designer.



The AI programming function is superbly designed and well-implemented. In fact, if you are considering learning a language you could do far worse than buy Omega for that purpose and no other, as it is very easy to learn. My one reservation is that non-programmers, who only use the modules, may feel that much of their money is wasted. Even so, full marks to Origin for the high degree of innovation. My recommendation? Buy it.

PC (also on ST, Amiga)  
\$24.95/\$29.95**HOYLE'S BOOK OF GAMES VOL 1**

Sierra

A little bit of diversification for Sierra. They have licensed Hoyle's Book of Games — a sort of official set of rules for all of those timeless, classic games. Volume 1 — Sierra love a series — offers an six card games: Solitaire, 32-Go, Rummy, Crazy Eights, Old Maid, Crilbage and Hearts. However, they are card games with a difference as your opponents are computers. So you can play Hearts with Loretta Bell Lamy, King Oulahan and Roger Wilco. In fact, you can choose from 15 opponents, all of

whom will offer some spitting conversation during the game, in addition to animated facial sequences. While not a release in itself, Hoyle's is handy to have if you need a change in your gaming diet.

|   |              |     |
|---|--------------|-----|
| S | Presentation | 80% |
|   | AI           | 80% |
|   | Atmosphere   | 80% |
|   | Engagement   | 70% |
|   | System       | 80% |
|   | Overall      | 80% |

Game Speed Speed

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MAKING YOUR MOVE FIRST



CRAZY EIGHTS

OLD MAID

HEARTS

GIN RUMMY

CRILBAGE

KLONDIKE

which and locations which play no part in the game. These areas take a lot of getting in, can result in high character damage and will only end in frustration when you find out that it was a complete waste of time. I'd like to have seen a greater degree of puzzle-problems and so on at the expense of some of the combat which was excessive at times. Overall, the sequel is an improvement over the original but by no means perfect. There's no UK distributor yet, however it is available on import.

Contact: Computer Adventure World, Broom Buildings, 1a Charing Cross, London EC1A 3DF. Tel: 0501 660000.

|          |              |     |
|----------|--------------|-----|
| <b>R</b> | Presentation | 88% |
|          | Attributes   | 94% |
|          | Engagement   | 88% |
|          | Atmosphere   | 70% |
|          | System       | 80% |
|          | Overall      | 73% |

PC £47.50 (import)

**ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS**

Koei

Romance of the Three Kingdoms (RTK) is a rare thing. A truly serious, strategy game with depth and fascinating historical background. Mindboggling that, I think I can safely say, has never been topped in such an accomplished way before. Chiefly because it is written by Koei, a Japanese company about the format which existed in China at about 190 AD.

Based on a 14th Century historical novel (which became an official history), RTK contains five scenarios from successive time periods. The main screen shows a map of China divided up into 11 states. You control one of the historical masters, each with a variety of positive and negative traits, a set number of states and a wish to unite China. A variety of state information can be accessed (number of castles, horses and beautiful women (Y — all can be used in the name of politics). Factors, such as mining potential, affect a state's economy. You have a number of generals and armies who spread your policies throughout China (using a clever combat system). Each general has a different loyalty level (you can do the general).

You can allocate resources to food production, training troops, building defenses, undertaking covert action and so on. Trying to expand while keeping everyone fed, protected, loyal and generally happy is difficult because the computer players are tough and cunning. Watch for the horses (are offering fire and horse in one hand and a knife, hidden, in the other. To describe a game with the depth of RTK is impossible in this limited space. There are a couple of slight quips in the gameplay (players call the same no matter how many times you have, for instance) but they cannot touch the quality of this product. Incidentally, I was very surprised to find out that a sys-

my game of this quality and depth is to be released on the Nintendo. I've no exact dates but I'd guess the initial release would be in the States around Christmas. Are Nintendo mounting a serious attack on the strategy/RPG market? See this month's news.

Contact: Computer Adventure World, Bank Buildings, 1a Charing Cross, Birmingham B44 6EL Tel: (021) 5661032

|          |                |            |
|----------|----------------|------------|
| <b>S</b> | Presentation   | 80%        |
|          | AI             | 87%        |
|          | Atmosphere     | 86%        |
|          | Engagement     | 91%        |
|          | System         | 84%        |
|          | <b>Overall</b> | <b>81%</b> |

ST (also Amiga) £19.99

## EMPEROR OF THE MINES

Impressions

As a space age miner you must take in as much profit for your company as is humanly possible. The targets being a number of moons scattered about the game map. To prevent the possibility of the game becoming a mindless tale of mind-numbing, treasure is divided into episodes. The object being that after a passage of time, a new set of game variables are introduced. For example, the first episode lets the player settle in, so nothing much happens. Episode two introduces the possibility that you might not be alone, the third introduces potentially disastrous asteroid showers and so on...

Which is all well and good but the sheer fact I had interest in Emperor pretty quickly. It looks atmospheric and some depth of gameplay. However, it was the control method which frustrated me most. Spacecraft movement consists of clicking in your craft and then the area you want it to move to. I suspect that you have to be quite careful where you click because my wife never went where they were supposed to, some of them dived wildly around the screen. After hours of frustration from loss-control, I sighed and switched off.

|          |                |            |
|----------|----------------|------------|
| <b>S</b> | Presentation   | 78%        |
|          | AI             | 85%        |
|          | Atmosphere     | 83%        |
|          | Engagement     | 85%        |
|          | System         | 83%        |
|          | <b>Overall</b> | <b>80%</b> |

ST (also Amiga, PC, 64) £19.99

## DAILY DOUBLE HORSE RACING

CDS

Daily Double Horse Racing (DDHR) simu-



lator, according to CDS, is day at the races! Therefore, spending a day at the races involves betting on horses for the maximum gain by the close of the day. The game can be played with up to four players.

The packaging includes a relatively large racing paper containing the form for 180 horses and 12 jockeys. You can bet in a variety of ways: parlays, daily double, exacta, etc. After handing over your cash, you watch your horse race in a short animated sequence.

My problem with DDHR is that I became quickly bored with the whole thing. The excitement of betting on horses hinges on gambling your hard-earned cash. That's



about it, is DDHR, you don't — so what's the point? Maybe if you played a horse trainer, managed a stable and so on, there would be more enjoyment, but as it is I would leave well alone.

|          |                |            |
|----------|----------------|------------|
| <b>S</b> | Presentation   | 88%        |
|          | AI             | 88%        |
|          | Atmosphere     | 70%        |
|          | Engagement     | 74%        |
|          | System         | 84%        |
|          | <b>Overall</b> | <b>82%</b> |

### Version Update

PC £29.95

## ROMMEL — BATTLES FOR NORTH AFRICA

SSI/Electronic Arts

Previously released on the C84, SSI's *Rommel* has been successfully converted to the PC, complete with a variety of additions and changes to system. They include the 'map walk' which allows you to move from one area of the map to another, division information now includes the number of battalions in the divisions as well as PzA info, division HQs which are attacked map 'shower' which is then displayed to the nearest friendly objective, etc. Improved graphics enhancing the gameplay — especially the combat sequences. Intelligent improvements and superior packaging make *Rommel* a 'must buy' for PC wargamers.

MACHINE UPDATE 87%



### Version Update

PC £29.99

## MANIAC MANSION

Lucasfilm-US Gold

Well, I declared it ever seeing a conversion of Lucasfilm's first successful animated adventure line, the series of *Labyrinth* which made its first appearance on the C84. The PC and ST updates are very similar, but the ST graphics have a little more focus, sound is better, too. Structurally, *Maniac Mansion* is played better than other *Zak* or *Roby* Lucasfilm's recent incarnations using the same system, maybe because the game data is made an enclosed space (ie: the mansion). *Maniac* does have faults, though. You cannot control all three kids at once, they tend to wander all over place and the lack of sound effects reduces atmosphere. However, *Maniac* is still an enjoyable romp.

MACHINE UPDATE 76%





PC (also Amiga, ST, C64) Ethos

## SPACE ROGUE

Origin/Mindscape

Imagine a 3-D space flight simulation, in the 16-bit world, mixed with a full-blown RPG, in the ultimate style: the result would be Space Rogue. Designed by Paul Newquist, Space Rogue is a unique combination of a game combining strategy, simulation, adventure and RPG, held together with a fascinating plot which builds and turns as often as your Starliner's autopilot.

The voluminous package arrives with two disks, a 60-page Starliner Owner's Guide and Navigation Manual (complete with amusing graphics), reference booklet, 16-page novella, colour star-map, an advertisement for Hive (more later) and two inserts of the game's spaceplots, which can be folded into place from a push-out cardboard base.

The background to the plot is that the human race are not so friendly with an interstellar race called the Marcks. A full-on war is being fought by the isolated star sequences.

Your ship handles very well, especially with mouse-control. In fact, the designers of

On a routine trading mission in the backwater Karonus system your merchant ship, the **PRINCESS BLUE** picks up a **Small Craft Distress Beacon**.



"No life readings," says Captain Balfree. "Looks like a derelict. You're on EVA duty, Private, so scope it out. Make it quick! We're behind schedule."

the flight sim area also worked on Chuck "Nigger" Flight Trainer. A full range of external views are possible. This part of Space Rogue is a typical trading game where you must increase your cash-revenue to purchase equipment for your craft. All of the 3-D objects move smoothly, control is well established and the four different classes are imaginative. Some are ring shaped, others look like animal carriers, etc.

Landing on a docking area activates the look-down RPG element, where you can trade and interact with the characters. The latter is accomplished via selecting menus of topics. Some conversations may involve news, gossip and clues while others may propose business or ask for favours which may lead you into interquels. You can also play Hive, an arcade game found in some bars. This is an excellent vehicle to

underscore the racial hatreds towards the Marcks because the game involves, as Robert Garret (Origin's founder and VP) says "blowing on the jets!" It is a fully workable arcade-game which you can enjoy within the confines of the game. Space Rogue blends action with an in-depth story-line, sprinkled with humour, hate, revenge and all the other emotions which enhance an RPG. Thoroughly recommended.

|          |              |     |
|----------|--------------|-----|
| <b>R</b> | Presentation | 98% |
|          | Attributes   | 79% |
|          | Engagement   | 88% |
|          | Atmosphere   | 98% |
|          | System       | 97% |
|          | Overall      | 92% |

## Preview

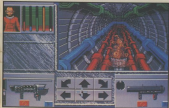
### XENOMORPH

#### Interceptor

Xenomorph is very intriguing. When I say that it resembles Dungeon Master and Wolfenstein, you will understand why. The premise may I dare say not quite finished but initial impressions are favourable. I just hope the fairly unresponsive mouse commands are fixed before the final release.

You must wonder a derelict mining

colony on Adergata, an area infested with aliens known as Xenomorphs, in an attempt to find components to repair your ship, find provisions, fuel and re-program the ship's computer so that you can get the hell out. But what was the fate of the 200 workers who worked at the colony and where did all of those bloody things come from? Your character revives his attributes the more favours you earn. Available for Amiga, ST (\$29.99, November) and PC, C64 (June, 1993).



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# DOMARK

# The Games machine

## reviews

### 72 ■ ONSLAUGHT

Are you strong mad? If you are or aspire to be, Onslaught is the game for you. A 'fantastic' sports — a playfully solo warlike — is taken through the lands of battles, a winning country yet to find a dominant force. Using a map to select an area adjacent to the one you occupy, soldiers — some on horseback, some swimming across — are brought past to capture the flag and secure the area. High-quality graphics show fantastic attention to detail and the gripping bloodthirsty action will appeal to Genghis Khan and gentle peaty alike.



### 90 ■ POWER DRIFT

The full, sit-down version of this illegal, role-up has been known to make a few people feel a bit ill so it's probably just as well such hydraulic extravagance is impossible for the home. However, Activision have successfully converted all the hyper bonds, roller coaster hills and the inextinguishable urge to win. With 25 different challenging routes it will be a long time before you can find the Power Drift trophy above your head.

### 85 ■ OPERATION THUNDERBOLT

The predecessor to this bloodthirsty game, Operation Wolf, needs no introduction and its conversion gave Oons a deserved Number One last Christmas. The Marine Corps crew have done an equally good job here with its two-player mode. The additive gameplay retained and graphics painstakingly reproduced. Go for your life.

### 76 ■ CHASE HQ

Here are the young stars of so many American cop shows, speeding down the LA highways, engine roaring and tires screeching. Naturally,

you're the hero, Tony Gibson, and together with your partner, Raymond Brandy, you have to catch the villains identified by Nancy back at HQ. Experience the thrill of the chase and the game which could well be the top for Oons this Christmas.

### 74 ■ NORTH AND SOUTH

A 'teach yourself' Cockney rhyming slang program. In no, sorry, it's actually infogramed, tell release, and has the players leading the Unionists (North) or Confederates (South) in the American Civil War. States have to be strategically taken, control decided by field battles and forts invaded by lone heroes. Inspired by Defender of the Crown, North and South has a great sense of humour, fantastic funny music and above all a tremendous fun to play.

### 88 ■ INTERPHASE

In the 21st Century you'll be able to do all those things you've always fantasised of doing (ah-ah!) using a DreamWorks machine. But it's Imagoworld's 3-D interactive messages have been added to the recorded dreams, substantial to influencing peoples minds. Explore the surreal world of a recently completed in an unusual combination of high-tech, high 3-D graphics, first-person shoot-'em-up and puzzle game that excels on all counts.

### 78 ■ CABAL

Oons seem to have the monopoly on computer-aided shoot-out games — and Star Player! In this game you're guiding the finger force of a few (if) commands, going behind enemy lines to destroy them from within. Simple to play but highly exciting, fans of Op Wolf-style games will love it.

### ■ STUNT CAR RACER ■ C64

All the speed, realism and playability of the ST — give it a test drive as soon as possible!

### ■ GPT ■ AMIGA

Consent get another fine Update as they of good old Officer Bob — this time with full screen scrolling and lively audio.

### ■ STORMWIND ■ AMIGA

While retaining the compelling gameplay of the Spectrum original, Hewson have produced some amazing graphics and sound for this 16-bit version. Go ahead and rescue some fairies!

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| Iron Warriors         | 80 |
| Star Wars             | 80 |
| Thunder               | 80 |

Score  
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# ONSLAUGHT

Hewson

**F**or years the land of Gargore has been at war, many bands of warriors have toiled each other to death in a vain attempt to gain control. Now one army has sent its secret weapon into the fray. 'Fantasia' are feared by all, and with good reason. These magical warriors live only to fight and are thereby a one-man army. It is as one such 'Fantasia' that you are cast, a lone warrior sent on a quest to pillage, train and generally make everyone's life a complete misery.

You are presented at the start of the game with a map of Gargore, divided into

squares — each one occupied by different groups of enemy soldiers. The first task is to choose one of the adjacent squares, whereupon you're presented with a portrait of enemy strength. You enter a battle ground next to your own army's flag and the idea is to push toward the enemy's flag, situated at the far right of the screen, and capture it.

In between the flags is a myriad of enemy soldiers and devices try to prevent you getting anywhere. You start out armed with only a mace, but a variety of weapons — both magical and normal — can be collected including crossbows, rapier, sword and

dragon shields. Spells, teleports and cash bonuses in the shape of bags of gold also appear from time to time to test your skills. All score collected are stored in the status display to be used when needed.

With each successful contact a small amount of energy is lost, but it can be replenished by collecting the blue coloured scrolls which materialise whenever an enemy is killed. While you attempt to reach the enemy flag position, they are trying to take yours, so don't let too many get past, because loss of the flag means the loss of the territory — lose all territories and it's end of game. If you lose a flag you go into



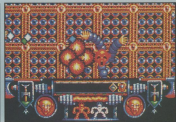
defensive mode; similar to the battle zone, only you are defending your land).

When an enemy territory is taken, or one of yours is lost, you enter a mind duel where four types of opponent face you: Commander, Chieftan, Lord and Deceiver — each one is more powerful than the last. Battle takes place on a screen dominated by a strange creature composed of a head and long arms — your enemy. Contrasting a hand icon moving around the screen's



outside, bolts of energy can be directed at inwards to destroy it. Winning moves you on to the next campaign.

Overthought is a great game of computer-aided violence, with plenty of rig, ruse and mangle run in store for a one-man army. Although the game is tough at first, a well-timed burst of energy on the fire button soon gets the adrenaline pumping and the onscreen character rampaging satisfactorily.



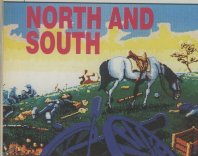
START AT  
95%

£24.95

Graphically the game is little short of brilliant: the character sprites are colourful, well defined and a bit to kill. Most little graphical touches abound, the most striking being the retreating of the creature (when you get lost), and the enemy cartoon crew who all stick their fingers in their ears when they fire their little guns. Various foes, colourful sprites and detailed backgrounds all add up to a first rate game.

#### OTHER VERSIONS

The Amiga version will be here soon, priced £24.95.



#### Informations

**T**he American Civil War was a long and bloody conflict in which millions died in a dispute that literally tore the country apart — a daunting source for wargaming, hardly an ideal of fun. But *Informations* have come up with a hilarious war game apparently based on a popular French cartoon strip. The prize comes out of the sky — choice of either Union or Confederates, one or two players, over the campaign starts and difficulty level (scout, sergeant or captain) — you're presented with a map of the USA, and

depending on which year you choose different situations arise.

Each player for computer in one-player mode takes it in turn to move men across the map. Flags appear on the playing field to inform what holds what territory, but battles only occur if a platoon of enemy red dots are in a square at the time you attack.

In strategy mode the battles are fought for you and the outcome is known within seconds, but in arcade mode a battleship appears. Here, depending on your relative strengths, each army is allotted a certain

£24.99

92%

From the recorders the first bars of the intro tune blast from your TV speaker you realise this is no ordinary game. The hilarious cartoon graphics coupled with strange renditions of Civil War anthems and sound effects create an extremely playable arcade/wargame.

#### OTHER FORMATS

The Atari ST version is promised soon, price TBA.

number of artillery, cavalry and foot soldiers and you have direct control over them and should decide how best to use each. If a better man you gain control of that square, if not you lose the territory and also some of your men.

To gain more troops simply gain land around the safety so that passing men deposit gold into your safe and gold buys troops, or alternatively get control of the state which governs the gold, when ships come along they deposit soldiers according to the army that holds it. A word of warning, don't leave your positions on land opposite either the Union or the Mexican because they become very angry, the Mexican throwing bombs and the Indian lobbing a time-bomb.

The Civil War can have looked nothing like the anarchic game full of the surreal cartoon-style graphics one expects from *Informations*.

The computer plays a fairly tough game, but it is against another human that North and South is best played. It isn't all about marching around knocking every hell out of the opposition, some careful thought is needed as to where to place troops for best effect. Military historians will probably have a fit at the game, the rest of us will love it.

MC





Travel the world with...

# BEACH VOLLEY

Osman

**A**s one half of London's top volleyball ball teams, you and your partner are invited to enter the World Volley Championships. The only problem is that you have to beat the best overseas test players to continue, but as the test venue is your home city (in London) you don't have the hassle of qualifying. Although there are eight countries in all including America, Russia, Egypt and France to conquer.

But to win the match you do have to put some accurate leaps and bounds to score points. Seven points are needed to win a match, but a point is only scored if you are serving. There are three standard volley shots: the smash which can be used to serve the ball, but nearly to return it if your opponents try tipping it over the net. Camps are the standard defence move, have the ball is deflected with the forearms (and usually causes the perpetrator to end up with a face full of dirt), and finally there's the set which is used to set up the ball for a smash.

You view the players (two a side), with spectators ranged behind. Two 'Towers Of London' guards (resembling in behaviour) keep the score as both teams huff and puff their way round the pitch trying to score the most points. Service — either normal or a smash — is taken from the back of the court, and as long as the ball falls over the

net it doesn't really matter which you use.

When the ball is returned, you control the guy who has a large hand printing at his head. As the programmers have thoughtfully added a line cursor to tell you just where the ball will land, all that remains for you to do is to set up the ball for your partner to smash across the net (and hopefully into one of the opponents).

Games are played against the clock too, but a nice touch here is that this is probably the first game to use music as a warning that you're running out of time; when the real 'V' ball starts playing, panic, because a quarter of a million dollars is up for grabs, as well as the trophy.

Beach Volley, the best Ocean France product, is graphically and sonically as engaging, and although the sport (bath with our weather) is a minority interest, that game could do something for increasing its popularity.



APB

## APB

TENSEN/SONAR ■ £19.99

Ami BT 80%, Spectrum 80% — T1600s, C64 60%  
128K — 50%

Not a lot more can be said about Officer Rob and his continual search for law and

order, except that the Amiga game is at least here and looking just as good as the previous versions. The only slight difference is in the improvement of sound over the ST, but this is only to be expected.

**Machine update 80%**

**machine  
STAR  
UPDATE**

COLIN

**84%**

The main sprites have a very nice cartoonish feel to them, whilst the tunes and effects, especially the speech, keep the game up to snuff. The between-match screens are particularly amusing with the player and his pal reaching each destination by a range of transportation. The tunes and sound effects blend well with the machine's capabilities to add to what is an enjoyable sporting sim.

**OTHER FORMATS**

Ami BT £19.99, Spectrum, Amstrad CPC and Commodore 64 (COLIN) £19.99 (also) versions should be appearing on the shelves about now.



"Let's go Mr. Driver!"

## CHASE HQ

Doesn't

**T**he chase is on! There are a talent handful of games that could make it to the very top this Christmas and Chase HQ is the one hotly tipped to win the race. It takes its game plan from the most cluttered sections of Starline and Mutch, Rogak, Miami Vice and countless other American cog TV shows (or movies) — the ubiquitous car chase.

Yes, there's always some mean dude ready to leap into his flashy sports car and speed off, free screaming and engine roaring, our hapless heroes never far behind. And isn't there always a big pile of empty abandoned boxes halfway down one of the alleyways? And a big boy that backs out onto the road just in time to stop one of the two cars? But I digress...

The HQ of the title is featured (accompanied or personified) by Nancy who uses the light-tech control panel of your vehicle to tell you, the suave cop, who the real criminal is, what he's guilty of and what car he's driving. Then it's out onto the highway to begin tracking him down.

The status panel above the play area shows your score, time, speed, stage, gear and distance. This last figure tells you how far away your target is and obviously the greater your speed the quicker you'll catch him. To this end, you can kick in the turbo and when the two gears are just not enough, boosting your acceleration is a cinch of a feat.

Most likely, less speed, the old adage goes, and this is true for Chase HQ. There are junctions to be navigated, the correct turning given by a flashing message sent by Nancy, and it can be easy to go the wrong way at high speed. And at high



speed it's obviously more difficult to avoid time-wasting collisions and crashes.

With the target in sight the chase begins wailing and the red beacon flashing, and the target's car is marked with a big bloody arrow. Your car has to repeatedly ram him in order to damage it heavily, enough to force him to pull over, indicated by a vertical bar. Succeed within the set time limit

C64

C64

C14.95 disk

There are a good spread of cutouts in the status area which compensates a little for the mono road and cars, and the carmen of the hero and villains that appear on its miniscreen are very nicely drawn. Vehicles are clear and neatly designed if not detailed, and the main sprite looks and behaves nicely. Though roadside features don't update as smoothly as they could, they approach swiftly and are helped by the brilliant, smooth and realistic perspective of the landscape stripes and the road itself. The title screens have ten scan attractions, with a number of sequences involving the letters which form 'CHASE HQ' — zooming in from infinity, becoming full stops, letters hitting traps into position and so on. Though spot effects are merely average, 100% centers are in for a real treat. Various pieces of music simulate air channels, realistic bass and snare drums combined with complex sounds reminiscent of the better Commodore 64 instruments. On its own qualities alone Chase HQ is worth a look, but considering the game they accompany it's an essential purchase.







and it's on to the next case. Fat and Nancy has some fresh words for you... and maybe even a letter of dismissal.

It's a pleasant surprise that a simple test to the wild and absurd racing game can make a game very, very playable. In the average slaver you're pursuing the leader or so as to overtake and head the field. Chasing a distant car with a view to forcing it to stop and condemning its driver to maintenance gives a real purpose to skidding around miles of twisting, tortuous roads, dodging traffic.

Levels don't just differ in colour and simple roadside attractions. Cliffs, bridges, junctions and buildings all help to make each of the five levels distinct and add to the five classes competing. Few levels may not seem like much, but avoiding the foul villain in the slammer takes enough effort for you to realise this game is repetitive, and great times (and so score bonuses) are always rewarding to beat.

Chase HQ really shows what job satisfaction is. Being a cop and bringing a villain to justice brings real pleasure into an already playable game and helps make it an addictive pastime. Will lighten up your Christmas stocking.

WIL

#### OTHER FORMATS

Amstrad 517 (£19.99), Amiga (£24.99), Commodore 64 and Amstrad (Spectrum prices) released around December 5.

Commodore 64/128

## Battle Chess

Electronic Arts ■ £14.95 (disk only)  
Amiga 486... £14.95; Amstrad 486... £14.95

The intricacy of the 16-bit graphics which describe this unusual form of chess may explain the time it has taken for an 8-bit version of the game to appear, but a good job

has been done. Although the characters are on the floppy side, the game's sheer playability ensures a high rating for its C64 incarnation. Battle Chess gives the ancient board game a lift by making all the player pieces into fighting warriors who unleash the board without a bloody and often hilarious battle. Nonetheless the fun element, the game still plays a mean hand when it comes to traditional values.

**Machine Update**

Great machine  
**STAR UPDATE**



Hergé's adventures of...

# TINTIN ON THE MOON

Intergames

**C**all comic-strip back here from the Fifties, and converted to popular TV series, it's strange that it has taken so long for the French detective to make it onto computer. The first moon rocket is about to be launched from the Atlantic Research Centre at Gwelf in Sylvestria and aboard is our unlikely hero Tintin — along with Snowy the wonder dog, Captain Haddock, Professor Calculus and Engineer Wolf. The game begins with the ship standing on the launch pad, the pentry is wheeled away and the countdown begins, 5-4-3-2-1, and the ship blasts off. The first task is to guide the rocket around the screen collecting red and yellow spheres, but avoiding the large chunks of rock that spin toward you. Yellow spheres top up your energy level (which shoots

down at an alarming rate if you are hit by rocks) and eight red spheres must be collected before you are allowed to move onto the next section. You are then taken into the rocket to take control of Tintin as he attempts to complete four tasks before you reach the moon.

They are designed tests that spring up without warning and usually without any plausible cause (the outcroppings can be found lying around for this purpose), before the bombs a despicable badde called Colonel Blotz has plotted, rescue your friends from the clutches of the evil Colonel and finally capture him. Your colleagues wander around the screen with you, but they do very little except end up being fed by Colonel Blotz and thus need rescuing. Fire fighting and bomb defusing are the top priorities, but once it's a while you return to the guide the ship into the sphere routine which replenishes lost energy. The game comes on in its own between the ground and space scenes until you finally reach the moon.

MC

£19.99

AMIGA  
**72%**

The opening sequence sets the tone for a comic romp and the ingame graphics keep the feel going well. But the 12-bit versions suffer from being too hard to play, so that only its associations are likely to make it appeal to Hergé fans.

£19.99

SEGA  
**70%**

Virtually identical to the Amiga game, the ST version suffers a little in the comic department, but Colonel Blotz is still as much of a pain to beat.

#### OTHER FORMATS

No other versions are planned.

128

A shoot-'em up with dualty

# CABAL



machine

STAR  
PLAYER

**E**ver heard of the TAD Corporation? Probably not, but if you've played this computer game you may recall that they are arcade game manufacturers, this being their highest profile machine so far. The plot leaves something to be desired: it's the usual story of an endangered US commander being held in high regard by his peers and his being selected for a special mission. The Enemy are making a nuisance of themselves but are prepared for a full-scale attack so it's up to him to get it done and destroy them from within.

In each of the 59 single-screen levels, you guide the commander left and right in front of a perspective scene of part of the enemy's base. A gunnery cursor has the freedom of the playing area and is used to gun down any enemy soldiers who dare show themselves. Bullets are oriented but there are a handful of grenades, also aimed with the cursor, which can be used on tanks, planes, helicopters, buildings and, if you're particularly nasty, bunches of people.

Suits released from the remains of such larger targets can be collected for extra points, grenades, a bazooka or machine gun. The latter weaponry is best whenever it fits in, but only used as shields against the relentless hail of bullets.

An armoured car is raised a blue bar gradually turns red when it's full the screen and scene is completed.

Cabal is quite a surprise. Though it's essentially a single screen Operation Wolf and appears plain when watching someone play it, it's quite deceptive. The action isn't just firing as you shoot out soldiers while dodging their fire, and it's this duality that makes it so exciting: at the middle and top of the screen you have to get there in your sights and blow them away as quickly as possible while making sure you, at the bottom of the screen, don't get hit yourself. Two eyes are not enough!

Destroying tanks and aircraft also forces a battle on two fronts: just as you've fired it up, ready to launch a grenade with the space bar, you see a bullet heading straight for you and have to abandon your plan. Even without heavy artillery, just leaving out the soldiers is tough enough. You find yourself clashing frantically there are side to another, gambling whether you can safely

pass by an approaching missile, and pushing the fire button like mad — it really puts your index finger to the test!

Operation Wolf/Turboout fans are sure to return to this and indeed other games; players will like its direct controls too. There's no death or resurrection to Cabal, just fast, non-stop action and a feel of a lot of bullets flying around, but it's more than enough to keep you playing — it can be as addictive as the Ops, which is surely recommendation enough for purchase.

WL

£9.99

CIBAL

£14.99 disk

The Spectrum's options and treasure screens immediately attract attention, a rainbow of colours pulsating through the text, rushing onwards from the centre of the screen. The game screens are laid out carefully so that, although slash is not defined, different areas have their own colours, so that on certain levels there are five different colours on the playing area. Like the Commodore, backgrounds aren't detailed but are functional, although bullets can sometimes get lost in the microscreen. Sprites are very cartoon-like; soldiers have huge clown feet and swirl around jauntily and the main sprite is a bulky, meat-looking dude. The tanks move very quickly but bullets come in from less diverse angles than the Commodore, although there's a sting in the tail: when a life is lost your enemy-meter goes down, giving you some unexpected extra work before the level can be completed. However, the selection on doing that easily makes it all worthwhile so you're sure to keep playing and playing.

SPECTRUM  
86%

£9.99

CIBAL

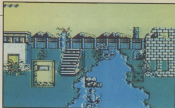
£14.99 disk

A colourful and well drawn loading picture leads to an unremarkable but juicy, dramatic life form. Backgrounds are a bit of a disappointment, bright but lacking definition, though sprites compensate. Enemy soldiers are small, characterful and animated with humorous exaggerated steps. The main sprite is cartoon-like, striking some great dynamic poses and animated well as he turns from side to side to spray bullets all over the screen. Tanks look tough and solid but are thankfully easily eliminated with grenades that move well through the air. Special effects are few and ordinary but adequate for the mindless but highly enjoyable action they accompany.

## OTHER FORMATS

Atari ST (£19.99), Amiga (£24.99) and Amstrad (£24 price) all expected around November 8.

CIBAL  
87%



Rentokill never have this sort of trouble

## XENOPHOB

MicroStyle

**T**hose of you who opt a dictionary for facility will no doubt be aware that xenophobia means 'One who has a distasteful fear of anything alien'. Alien nations have been sneaking up on us humans for years, making us and planning their attack.

Now we have decided to destroy the bug-eyed fiends and end the invasion for ever. The aliens have been tracked to a series of deserted space stations and moon bases.

Three teams of crack exterminators are

on the job, code-named Blue, White and Red squads. They travel the cosmos and act as trouble-shooters... in anyone starts trouble, they shoot them. It's decided to send two members of the team in to test the aliens' strength, so you — with or without a friend — must choose a character and give him up to your name.

At the first base the alien warlords are everywhere. Initially armed with a phaser, better weapons can be picked up further into the maze of corridors and rooms... but although some weapons are more powerful than others, they aren't necessarily as reliable. The alien race is a variety of guises, but don't spend too long shooting them because time is of the essence; the boss contains self-destruct devices which fry the aliens if you fail to kill them all. Your mission is saved if the base dies, go, but Earth government won't be pleased and clock you a hefty points penalty.

The action is fast and frantic at the way because the aliens are vicious little pests who stop at nothing to destroy you. And as they generally outnumber you at least two to one, Xenophobe soon becomes a test of bravery and fast trigger fingers.

MAC

19.99

CDL

£14.99 disk

Slushy CDL sprites jump manfully around similar backdrops and shoot. The blockiness gives a less elegant feel than other versions, but otherwise gameplay is up to the same standard.

CDL

74%

19.99

CDL

£14.99 disk

The normal large, colourful but blocky Amstrad sprites abound, but aren't getting in the way of the exciting gameplay which is certainly as frenetic as in other versions.

Amstrad

72%

24.99

CDL

With a pounding soundtrack and impressive intro screen, you should expect something graphically stunning from the Amiga, but although the sprites are colourful and the backgrounds scroll smoothly, the machine is capable of better. Still the gameplay is affected very little by the graphical details.

Amiga

76%

## VERSION UPDATES

Amiga

APB

TURBID COMRADE £14.99

Ami BT 80%, Spectrum 80% — TOMBRA, CDL 80% 100% — CDL

Not a lot more can be said about Officer Bob and his continual search for law and order, except that the Amiga version is at last here and looking just as good as the previous versions. The only slight difference is in the improvement of sounds over the ST, but this is only to be expected.

Machine update 88%



Amstrad CPC

Dynamite Dux

ACTIVISION CDL case, £14.99 disk

Ami BT 80% — TOMBRA, Image 80% — TOMBRA

A neat cartoon sequence introduces the game nicely but life must be boring. The shoot time is reduced in-game but this enables smooth, swift scrolling in all directions. Graphics are colourful and detailed, the humorous sprites being of good quality, and animation is fine. Sound is limited to occasional simple effects, but doesn't damage the excellent playability of this accurate conversion.

Machine update 84%

Ami BT

Shinobi

Virgin's release

Ami BT 100%, Spectrum 100%, Amstrad CPC 80% — TOMBRA

Unsurprisingly similar to the Amiga version, bland colours and simple drawn, mainly animated sprites are directly taken from the 16-bit Commodore, but even with jolly scrolling, very few surprises, simple effects and warbling music round off the game, or, unpleasantly.

Machine update 48%



Go ahead, cyberpunk.

# INTERPHASE: EDGE OF DREAMTIME

ImageWorks

In the 21st century the limitations of physical reality frustrate the thronging masses, giant video screens, pulsing music, video games, interacting substitutes and violent sports simply not being enough. The solution was found in the DreamTracks, sophisticated devices linked with the brain to enable one's wildest dreams to be experienced by the user. With so many fantastic, exciting things to do in a highly realistic environment yet completely safe, understandably, it soon became the latest and biggest entertainment craze of the 21st century.

Something was bound to go wrong, somehow, somewhere, sometime. The Dreamers whose thought patterns were recorded for replay by DreamTracks machines began accepting bribes in return for inserting additional messages into the Tracks. At first simply to make consumers buy certain products, more recent illegal messages have influenced political votes on a large scale. Thought control is only a small step away.

Data ex Dreamer, Check, has decided to help stop this corruption, aiming to destroy a particularly dangerous Track. He's asked his girlfriend to enter a High Security building (what a nice chapel while he eliminates the security computer to deactivate all the defense systems).

The computer's programs are represented not by numbers but simple 3-D graphics icons. The windows, icons and pointers of user-friendly computers have been replaced by fast moving 3-D landscapes. The databanks of various systems are now represented by abstract shapes rather than names on a pull-down menu. Dock with one and you can access the data. And while you search through the interphase,

security systems in the shape of attack fighters zoom after you.

The game starts with you entering the building through a turnstile entrance, avoiding the energy-tapping walls and mini-database room. You emerge in black space. Above and below you are colored squares which you fly through to other levels. Various wind graphics tilt the landscape, while attack ships blast away. Press the spacebar and you can use the mouse to click on one of the options on the control panel.

Your girlfriend sends messages to tell you if she's in trouble. To start off with she's blocked by a door. A blueprint map of her current floor can be called up, pointed to on and scrolled around to find the door. Then look-on your navigation system, but from the map and flashing arrows indicate which way to go, eventually leading to a green cube in a gray frame. This is the sub-program controlling the door. Shoot it and the door opens. Your girlfriend waits through, is spotted by a TV camera and promptly killed by a security robot — perhaps switching off the surveillance systems would've been a good idea!

If you should need to look the opened door, you can go to a workshop to pick up a green cube. Use a tractor beam on it, replace it in the gray frame, and the camera is deactivated. Other security systems to work out include turnstiles (which change the direction the robots go), pressure pads, electriced floors and lifts. To complete a level you must get the girl to the lift, then fly through the database tunnel to the next stage, at which point you can save the game.

Interphase is a strange, almost surreal game influenced by *Dem*, the blue

machine

STAR  
PLAYER

Dreamtime mode, cyberpunk (the particular shade of science fiction favoured by sci-fi fan Stuart Wynn) and, with its fast, fluid 3-D, *StarGlider 2*.

Interphase itself is a combination of top-to-bottom run-up and level-sliding adventure/puzzle game. Initially it all seems completely bewildering, but persistence soon reveals the basic simplicity of the game structure. Level one can then be solved quite easily, but then level two is much more of a challenge; the game does interlocking form a more complex puzzle overall. Switching off cameras, rotating turnstiles etc. requires a lot of brain navigating and blasting of pesky security craft — traditional shoot-em-up skills and a sharp mind are both vital.

Interphase has incredible puzzles, blasting and graphics wrapped up in one intriguing package, one that 16-bit owners would do well to take a look at.

★★★★

ARISA  
90%

£24.99

Links, moves and plays very similarly to the STC sound being slightly better. Impressive graphics and involving gameplay make it equally as good a product and just as good value.

ARISA  
90%

£24.99

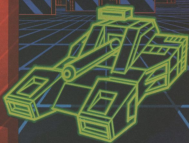
Interphase presents you with a most unusual environment: each level consists of black space with coloured squares arranged in lines on the floor and 'railing' to form a vertically restricted view. These squares move smoothly and quickly as you fly around and generate a suitably artificial, computer atmosphere that is almost bludgeonable. The various components you see are imaginatively designed and well animated, as are the marauding computer defense craft (watch out for the load on a singlepod on level two). Blueprints are authentic looking but the icons are limited to spot FX and a short line 'Young Candidate' on the title screen.

## OTHER FORMATS

PC (£24.99) to follow shortly.



# OMEGA™



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## HOT FROM THE STATES!

You will undoubtedly spot that the four reviews on this page and Battle Squadron on the next look a little different from usual. TGA always strives to get important games reviewed as fast as possible, so when a product is being developed over in America we get our man on the spot, Marshall W. Rosenberg to do the job. Here's what he has to say about four major TV licenses and an evening about 'em up.

\*\*\*\*\*

# THE FLINTSTONES

### Moralizations:

**P**oor Fred. Everytime it's always telling him what to do; his wife Wilma, the kids, even his best pal Barney. Every time he tries to have a bit of fun just for himself — someone interferes. The Flintstones (which was the first cartoon show to appear on prime-time in the States) may not be a computer game — but things haven't changed for Fred a bit. He's still getting into trouble.

The game is obviously suitable for Fred, set in a world dug out from a prehistoric dig filled with the Dinos, his and the other cartoon figures are big — occupying over a third of the screen, with all the little gestures and movements expected, done in a bright and colorful manner. Movements are

natural due to a hierarchical system which maintains all the parts' moving up each figure (this also enables the same parts to be used for all the characters with minimal memory and CPU hang-ups). Favorite is still Barney Rubble. Based loosely on Norton of the Honeybees (as Fred is on Ralphie/Jackie (Nelson)), Barney is an affable as ever. He always goes along with Fred's wishes, but that causes problems often as not. Barney may seem complacent, but he's dangerous. As you and Fred will find out.

Everything appears crossed in a anti-epicure (opposite of futuristic) stone-age television cabinet. You can even change the channels. So what do you do to play Fred? Very little besides point and click with the



85%

mouse. You 'indicate' where you want him to go — over to the refrigerator for a snack, perhaps out to the car to take a drive. What happens next follows his own wishes. Just don't expect peace and quiet, trying to get the bowling rock — or ball, and mouse. Having to wait Wilma's mother will tell you as to about 'em up ever could.

This non-traditional approach captures the essence of the big guy with the te — meaning that no matter how hard you try he still gets into trouble. Which for us, poor Fred notwithstanding, is a lot of fun.

### OTHER FORMATS

Also to be released for Amiga and Atari ST.

\*\*\*\*\*

# JOHNNY QUEST

### Moralizations:

**T**ake an action-based cartoon show centering around a young boy named Johnny Quest, add his friend and companion Huckle, Johnny's dog Rascal, Dr. Benton, and all around good guy Haze — and you've got the makings of any kid's fantasy of going off on an adventure. Sure the animation was

extremely limited, the stories silly, but it was fun because all the elements worked together (look at Star Trek: The Next Generation, it's almost a live version of Johnny Quest). With such a wealth of material to work with, how could this car-

toon version fail?

Especially as it combines the best of a number of gaming genres. Adventure fans can poke around with the mouse trying to find out what's going on in the mysterious lands discovered. Action/arcade lovers get their turn to beat because Huckle is always breaking light scores, hidden passages, ways, locked doors to break down. The more you know about playing Johnny Quest, the less of a mystery — but you can bet that you'll need your puzzle-solving wit. Helping Johnny is Haze, with his magic that sometimes works (very rarely in the right way as we recall. Haze is always there to lend a paw — and when all else fails, turn into that weird TV construction.

Most of the action takes place on the single large window. Directly below is a section which shows the shooting of enemies and items. Characters vary in size, with sections of the game consisting of very large graphics. What's more important is that animation using 3-D moved perspective moves at a quick pace, and positions are made to incorporate the richness of our young hero in the gameplay. Several of the scenes have been digitized from the original cartoon, and text display is combined with on-screen.

The theme is adventure. Humour is not really found here, although Haze and Huckle are definitely played for comic relief. At its best, Johnny Quest will bring out that daydreamer within that still longs to swing through the jungle, poke through outer space, and defeat all that is Evil.

### OTHER FORMATS

Also to be released for Amiga and Atari ST.



# SCOOBY DOO

## Illustrations

It's not just the better. It's *Scooky Doo*. Now you can join the gang as they hunt down clues in a series of adventures. Follow Shaggy into the Mystery of the Arkey Zoo Zoo, take Velma along to the Ghost Town, accompany Freddy into the Ski Village, and meet Daphne in the Dayman's Haunted Mansion.

Features abound in this 'scary' game: there's a voiced 3-D perspective, and several audio sequences. Our favorite is trying to run away from the Doomsday Gnomes (and when the gang turns together all jumbled up — very cartoon-like, too). Difficulty levels give you a chance to succeed, while an interactive map gives an indication of where you are. You are in a fully explorable countryside, and any of the gang can become the leader — which is especially helpful should one feel prey to the prey.

## OTHER FORMATS

Also to be released on Amiga, Atari ST and Commodore



# THE JETSONS

## Illustrations

You can stop waiting for the future — it came over 50 years ago in the shape of a very hip cartoon show. The Jetsons defined most of what we call the late Sixties — fun styles, way of talking, and electronic gadgetry galore. That it was so heavily in

a time period some thousands of years in the future didn't mean much. Humanized may have been heading for the stars, but at that was deemed here could be contained in a blast-powered

car opener.

Enough of philosophy, now consider the problem: you're George Jetson — respectable member of the community, family man (his son Elroy, etc), with the proper (toy) kids (Betty and Jane), the beloved wife who drives you up the wall. Plus, a rewarding (and satisfying) job at the Spacelade factory doing who-knows-what for that creep of a boss, Spacely. Oh, and Astro the dog too of course.

The game has other basic purposes: survival. Which is more subtle here than most — it's not just avoiding aliens from space or deadly rocket blasts. — it means trying to keep your job so as to support and maintain your family. It also means putting up with the boss, and trying not to distinguish into a tightly packed string ball. George is not out of here yet.

Set in a graphic-adventure format, there are windows in view in order to take the world. The biggest window indicates where you are, with objects to inspect and take. Point and click techniques enable you to see inside things, and also to move around. A shaggy inventory area keeps track of what's been found, and the interface includes an option for 'choosing a path'.

This may all seem somewhat tedious, but it isn't really being a man in the future (that). And we don't really give any more of this one away either.

## OTHER FORMATS

Also to be released for PC and Atari ST



to the right leads to the factory floor and the controls are more colorful and more modern.

The Jetson is not to be used in the car.

"It's game I'm like for me."

Against stacked odds

# BATTLE SQUADRON

Interphase Software/Electronic Arts

**S**ometimes a review can be easy. No question what to call *Battle Squadron*: it's a shoot-'em-up. You fly back and forth the length of the screen as vertically scrolling landscapes of a mechanized planet pass by; landscapes which hatch enemies at a constant rate in an attempt to wipe you out.

The program under review is a "beta version," which means that the "cut the shelf" disk could prove a bit different. But this is the only way to get the facts to you quickly on a game which features some of the best high-speed animation yet seen on the Amiga.

The story line is simple: You land a companion ship if desired, are wiping out the hostile forces besieging the planet Terania. Your craft can move over the entire screen length, and is joystick-controlled. Once all has been quelled it's time to head into the inner Core to finish the job. There's even a sign indicating where the entrance is located. Of course there are a few problems to take care of before you can enter.

Heading the list is an abundance of alien craft which appear from offscreen singly, or in pairs, or as a group. Below, self-propelled devices launch fire underground which protect their contents from repeated blasts. Add to this a few ground

tanks operating on a railway system, plus mobile cannons, and it's easy to see that things are not pleasant over Terania.

Fortunately your powerful nose-mounted laser pulverizes most things in the way, but



occasionally special tanks appear within the rubble which control ports, shields and mount extra weapons.

If *Battle Squadron* sounds like another variation of the tried and tested spacewar versus alien planet, that's because it is, what makes this game work is its ultra-fast playing speed. And with multiple levels of



The first game to be seen on the shores of Britain from Interphase, *Battle Squadron*, is imported by ex-Microsoft chief, Stuart Ball, through his new company, Electronic Zoo. Turn to the World of Commodore (below report on page 46 for more info on the new American company.

animation for each onscreen sequence, it gives a believable feeling of really blowing up badies and wiping out ground installations. An option screen will be included to allow for various controls, and you don't have to worry about spending your team mates, because both ships are expensive to their own weapons.

It's the rapid fire animation, coupled with effective sound and a long running music track containing the right amount of strong beats which puts this shoot-'em-up head and shoulders above its many allies. *Battle Squadron* isn't a new idea, but in the genre of visually bright and addictive shoot-'em-ups, it certainly deserves to be right up there at the top of the heap.





Back at the moon

# ALTERED BEAST

Activision/Sega

**T**his is another home computer arcade license which we've already reviewed as a comedy combination — on the Sega Mega Drive, as part of issue 19's Japanese special. To recover the plot, the daughter of a god-like man has been kidnapped by an evil sorcerer, and the corpses of two ex-heroines have been re-animated in order to rescue her. They have to battle rightward through the sorcerer's monstrous hordes of followers to eventually find and rescue the diseased damsel.

First punching and kicking combos and dashes in a graveyard, the task at hand is made considerably easier by collecting energy pods left behind by a fleeing alien assassin rival. The first two collected increase muscle power, while on the third a startling metamorphosis occurs: the player becomes a werewolf, with a nighty blue and fire-colored slaughtering tool guys.

Confidently directed power is essential for

**CD-ROM**  
**CD-ROM**  
C14.99 disk

Blockiness is largely unavoidable but care and tactical use of colour makes for pleasant, smooth-scrolling backgrounds. The sprites are a different matter. Some creatures are even more designed than they're meant to be, badly consumed and their animation — fairly basic in the original — is made stinger and slower. Theme music is strong, but sparsely used effects are none. It's often restricted to change between punch and kick moves and there's no continuous-play option so all the joyous strain doesn't seem worth it.

**CD-ROM**

**ARCADIA**  
**69%**

Though not quite as restricted, Amiga graphics are almost as small as the ST's, the smooth scrolling cinematic-style display is an improvement, however. Though better sounds are used, music doesn't work so well and effects get lost amid it.

The end of each of the five levels, where the sorcerer uses magic to transform himself into a huge nightmare beast.

The dedication and painstaking attention to detail of Japanese programming pays great rewards in their games, particularly arcade conversions. Playing the British language translations says something about the differences between the two countries. Some graphics of the versions reviewed here have obviously been tweaked over, but the majority don't make use of the respective machines' resolution and colour capabilities. Playability also suffers, and the red hot down to the lack of a joy pad's two independent buttons, assists advice is too great a number and are sometimes as awkward to kill as the power pods are to collect.

For fans of the series this is still a good enough conversion to warrant purchase. Most others will prefer to look elsewhere.

**W1**

**CD-ROM**

**ARCADIA**  
**70%**

Backgrounds are grainy and lack colour and detail as they swirl jerkily by, but sprites are neat, even if some are dim and animation overly adequate. Gameplay has pace, helped by energetic music and dynamic samples, but much confusion arises from the proper sprites — they are identical to one another.

## OTHER FORMATS

Segamax and Amstrad (CD) prices as TGM reaches the shelves.

## VERSION UPDATES

**Amiga**

### Dragonscape

WICKED SOFTWARE £19.95  
Amiga ST 80% — TGM2.0

One man and his dragon are out to save the world, but who will save us from them? The ST version replaced a less than enthusiastic welcome, as the Amiga we are afraid to say that it's still as dull. Backgrounds are nicely drawn, but control of the dragon is on the difficult side, so more time is spent spang-out of the scenery than killing bad-dies.

Machine update: 54%

**PC**

### Ferrari Formula One

ELECTRONIC ARTS £29.99  
Amiga/ST 80% — TGM2.0

It's quite a while since we've seen this game in the TGM column — the game's advantage for this version — the game's industry has advanced considerably during the past 10 months whereas as the it still a fairly standard F1s done.



There are a selection of tracks and variable Ferrari performance but keeping the car on the track is the real part of the game, and as a pseudo-simulation that isn't easy.

The introduction/tutorial screens are nicely drawn but ignore the cars are simplistic and the tracks are equally as bland with empty trackside and individual horizon features. The graphical jumps between frames are quite large and update is a bit slow and occasional effects (the engine is silent) are standard PC car-simulation.

Micro-simulation: Competing a race let alone winning one is a considerable challenge and such fun can be had mastering the controls of the vehicle. Car and racing enthusiasts will get most from this as it's quite expensive considering what it offers.

Machine update: 75%

**Amiga**

### Slayer

HERPACRAZ £14.95  
Amiga ST 80% — TGM2.0

Regrettably similar to the Atari ST version, the playing area is wider than the ST's but otherwise graphics are the same — colorful, metallic and high-tech. Music has better sounds but effects are poor (standard laser sounds, energy, explosions). A little easier than the ST but still a very difficult game. Slayer has few (if any) rewards.

Machine update: 43%



A rescue in Wolf's clothing

# OPERATION THUNDERBOLT

Ocean

**Y**ou have succeeded in producing the Number One computer game for Christmas 1988. Now go on to do the same in '89.

Anti guerrillas have hijacked a commercial transport DC-20 scheduled for Boston, USA. They demanded the immediate release of 23 imprisoned comrades — or in ten hours they would kill all hostages. The aircraft was lost somewhere over Calais, Africa, where it disappeared from radar.

The President of the United States negotiated through Calais's General Haden — who strenuously denied any knowledge of either hijackers or hostages. He told the President to send US forces into Calais and would regard them as invaders and doctors was. It is a tight situation and with time running out, it was the Chief Secretary who provided the answer: they would send Ray Adams, commander of Operation Wolf, to fight anonymously through Calais and free the hostages.

And yes, it's up to you to be the guiding hands of Ray's gunsight but this time a friend can help you as his ex-Military colleague, Hardy, in this operation — Operation Thunderbolt! Though it's generally the same bullet-spraying action it differs from Wolf in that in some of the eight levels you're travelling into the screen, a perspective view similar to a racing game — minus the curves and high speed. The familiar now rightward scroll also makes its mark with a vengeance.

This is the case in level (Mission) one, where you're marching up a road toward a church, where a spy is hiding. As in the original game, the playing area above the status panels is effectively your body (and that of your friend, if appropriate) so that a missile shot 'out of the screen' — be it bullet, Apache rocket, dagger or grenade — indicates your demise.

The gunsight has the freedom of the screen and is mostly used to gun down soldiers, of which there are more than enough, and there are items and at least two levels among them. It's also used to free hostages and to pick up useful items dropped by eliminated enemies. These include First Aid kits, power drinks, body armour, magazines and rockets to boost your ammunition supply. Rockets are used sparingly, generally upon helicopters but also jeeps, tanks and buildings.

Operation Thunderbolt is basically Wolf but on a bigger, better scale. In some levels you're shooting from a level or jeep and although your viewpoint is only altered by the addition of barely noticeable vehicle footage at the bottom of the playing area, it gives a much greater potential for varied enemy graphics. This, I'm sure, was the



intention when Tate designed the coin-op and it pays off, adding more life (if not beauty) to the gameplay. It's helped by the forward motion used in those levels — enemies approaching from the horizon makes

a pleasant change from side attacks.

Two-player games add more appeal and add volume to games as you shout out instructions to each other in order to massacre the enemy as quickly and efficiently as possible and get the hostages rescued.

Basically Thunderbolt has the same great mechanics, beautifully action that made Operation Wolf so fun and addictive to play, and in fact that's its only fault. (Some people may find it just too much like the original, although newcomers will be surprised at how playable it is and Wolf fans will love it.)

A year on from the best-selling original, Operation Thunderbolt has gameplay elements that both bring back memories and add new excitement, not least of which is the great two-player option. Fun, playable, addictive — go for your gun with Ocean and you won't regret it.

WL

**SPECIAL**  
**91%**  
£29.99 (incl. VAT)  
£24.99 (incl. VAT)

Other than red and blue for the status panels the game is in the same highly-detailed monochrome as Wolf although there's much greater graphic variety. Even setting the various clear backgrounds and threatening vehicles aside, there are several different types of soldier, each accurate representations of their armed selves, especially those wearing sunglasses in level six who are nothing short of brilliant. In sideways-scrolling levels soldiers appear in great numbers — sometimes the screen becomes virtually full of them — and many grenades and knives come spinning realistically toward you, all with two people firing a tough task on their hands. Scrolling suffers very little, leading in mind the amount of objects, although the perspective levels' nondescriptness has turned approach a bit jerky and definition is less professional in them. Spot effects are reasonable but can become monotonous, but the title tune is very good — tense and dramatic, setting the scene for this excellent shoot-out game.



## OTHER FORMATS

Commodore 64, Amstrad CPC (Spectrum version), Atari ST (£19.99) and Amiga (£24.99) all for release around November 26.



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**Table 1**

# TERRY'S BIG ADVENTURE

Stades

**T**erry's a little bored with life. Tired with watching Pioneer Girl Block it, eating baked beans, and juggling blue jelly, he's decided to go on an adventure — a big one at that — all around the colourful, magical land in which he lives.

One thing that hasn't but it's appeal to Terry is his target red yo-yo which he wields with deadly accuracy. It's just as well however for Terry is in fact of the variety of what little creatures that he encounters on his levels. He can't always knock them off easily only, however, as hitting something with the yo-yo causes him to be knocked backwards — perhaps into water or a green mushroom. These are normally avoided with a graceful jump, but Terry always has to be careful because he suffers from inertia which can cause him to slide along the ground.

Other than simply seeing the sights, Terry's aim is to collect special mushrooms he finds (for future lesson purposes — they make him dance around and jiggle a bit) but he can also pick up items to access certain parts of levels. Bags to multiply his score and gloves to throw an alternative weapon. Some creatures have behind letters when

disposed of. Collecting these which spell out T-E-R-R-Y gives him limited immortality and spelling E-X-T-R-A gains him another life to play with.

At first glance, the small graphics remind you of Super Mario Bros, then you play the game... and it reminds you of Super Mario

Bros, albeit with features of its own. A yo-yo isn't exactly a common game element — Frank is the only other game we can think of using such. It's an unusual weapon in that enemies have to be close for it to be effective and because of this it can provide some worrying moments — it's can the high semi-circularly shaped and level.

Another legacy from Bros are the hidden rooms and the bonus stages which all resemble those of the classic Nintendo game, and of course mushrooms are fungi inspired from the same source.

Nintendo refuse to licence-out Super Mario Bros and clones such as the 8-bit Great Mario Sisters haven't escaped their watchful legal eye, so its only variants such as this that can provide similar action. It's not as fun or addictive as the original, but if you haven't got a Nintendo it's currently the next best thing.



CRASH  
74%

£9.99

cas.

£9.99 disk

Though still short, Commodore sprites are nearer standard size than the ST's but will keep the Super Mario fanboy. They're drawn and animated well but, though smoothly scrolling, backgrounds are blocky and have few colours. Music is better than the ST's but still irritating, and there is no sound effects option. Not quite as good value as the ST but still a good buy.

CRASH  
78%

£14.99

The sprites are really remarkably small but still contain reasonable detail in their compact design and are animated simply yet amusingly and effectively. Backgrounds are colourful and neatly drawn, scrolling smoothly, but the background music is awful, luckily a few little effects can be selected. Great value at 10 quid.

## OTHER FORMATS

Improved sound and full-screen scrolling on the imminent Amiga version, priced £14.99.

## Stuntcar Racer

Microtype £9.99 cas., £14.99 disk  
for ST 100 — 100000

The fast and frantic action that scored the best out of us in the ST version is still present in the first of the 8-bit games. On the C64 obviously the graphical touches that haven't up the ST game are missing (the rag doll of the racers etc), but on the track the sheer

pure pounding playability is still there. The ST version was awarded a much deserved Star Player accolade and so the equally impressive Commodore game is definitely Star Update material.

Machine Update 90%



Drifting the night away

## POWER DRIFT

## Activities

In the history of computer and video games (counted like a good name for a magazine... no, on second thoughts perhaps not...) there have been a seemingly endless number of racing games with a wide variety of vehicles in which to speed around some form of track. Buggies, speedboats, motorcycles and, most commonly, various sports and Formula racing cars. In recent years the enormous realistic birds, tanks and spaces have been supplemented by stone-arch-shunning hydraulic cranes.

Sega's *Hi-Power Drift* provides the widest race so far with fast, violent hydraulics to complement fast, twisting courses, the result being one of the most (if not *the*) most exciting racing games of all time. What's more, this game is a new type of vehicle to play with — a low-slung, dual hot-rod that puts you very close to the ground. And how sure lucky enough for Activision to give us the convenience... for the hydraulics, that is.

*Power Drift* is nice enough to let you select the course you wish to tackle and there are five different circuits to each of those five circuits. Twelve drivers compete in each race and you're free to choose any one of this amusing, cartoon-like portraits.

An extensive panel at the top of the screen gives you score, time, course letter (A to E), stage and lap number, gear, and speed in kph. Above that is your current position and the head and shoulders of each driver — their expressions and movements change depending on their fortunes in the race.

Manual racing control intervention applies, the switching between the two gears,



although you're unlikely to have used your joystick to steer around such wandering circuits between Pillars, signs and palm trees are the roadside features to circuitry that have some very tight bends and roller-coaster hills, and on some sections (a 15-16) there are circuits that cross over themselves, figure-of-eight style, either at ground level or overhead, the road supported by poles.

On each circuit, the aim is simple: finish in the top three. If successful, you go on to the next circuit of the course, hopefully to complete them all, then to the next course of five — but it sure isn't easy!

However, that isn't much of a problem because if you *are* a PUP! That's also an accurate (if brief) description of the game's gameplay, which means *Activision* have captured the essence of *Power Drift* and produced a successful conversion.

Like any good racing game the urge to weave between the opposition and hit the front spot is high but actually doing it is something completely different, particularly taking in mind the tight corners and bumps that make *Power Drift* such an engaging game. Scoping in at first is usually satisfying enough so that the next circuit can be tackled — and with 25 tracks in total it'll be a long time before you've tried them all. It'll be

longer still before you complete them all in one game and claim the *Power Drift* trophy — so just make sure you don't waste any time getting hold of it a copy! **91**

CIBM

cost, £14.95

CIBM

Rearing in mind the CIB's resolution and detailed graphics, Chris Butler (*Space Harrier*, *Golden M'Goldies*, *Thunder Blade*) may do very well. Though on the liberty side, controls are clearly and adequately represented and the drivers' portraits are commendably close to the coin-op's. The test cars are the definition highlight, instantly recognisable as the venerable vehicles of the coin-op and combining well with the fast 3-D perspective courses. Roadside features approach jarrily but the track itself works fine — it's just a shame the hills lack side graphics as otherwise they're rather impressive. Good music goes well with the action, though effects are sparse. Playing similarly to *Conquest* (*Rugby Boy* but with fast, plentiful 3-D graphics somehow contained into a single fast, *Power Drift* is worth every penny.

CIB 128  
92%ARISA  
90%

124.99

Highly polished presentation does to that of the coin-op — like the game as a whole, the course/track selection screen is bright and colourful with cartoon-like portraits. Before each race begins, a view of the landscape (and around) is real in the background, speech accompanying the starting lights, a 'start' sign flitting across as the race gets underway. Road graphics are very nicely shaded but on corners jagged edges show on the roadside edges, due to the cells used to compose them. Still, at the speed everything moves this is no problem, and in fact it's too close to the coin-op in that the track often curves right off the screen, without the hydraulically tilting it detracts a little from the gameplay. Car sprites are very nicely defined and match the overall presentation of the conversion. Tasty little music leads to lively effects samples — accelerating, firing, growing engine and very clear speech.

## OTHER FORMATS

Atari ST (£14.95), Spectrum and Amstrad CPC (both £84 prices).



**T**hree basic (if not clichéd) sword and sorcery game elements are, a beautiful princess, to be kidnapped; two, an evil sorcerer, to do the kidnapping; and three, a valiant second-in-command the rescuing. In the action-based grunge adventure game's named Tanya, Fael-Sabath and Fair-Storm — is that order, I hope — but there's more to this tale than meat.

The kingdom of Belath was once ruled by Helen, a noble and appointed guardian of the gates of time and space to the gods themselves. As such a significant point Belath was sure to come under threat, but it wasn't until Helen died and his time-traveling powers passed on to his faithful knight, Fair-Storm, that it came. Fael-Sabath has developed strong magical powers and has cloned himself, spreading his selves through time, but still cannot see the Kingdom. Thus he has kidnapped Tanya to lead Fair-Storm into a trap so that he may steal the key to space/time gates.

To destroy Fael-Sabath Fair-Storm has to find the magic amulets of power, so as to eliminate Sabath's clones. Heavy Metal bands all sound the same anyway. Before the game proper starts you select the time zone from a row of five scenarios (classic time travel). You're then magically transported to a fantastically scintillating land, ranging in time from the stone-age to the space-age of the future, and occupied by assistants slaying from cavemen to robots. Attacking sword moves wear down their energy but if you don't use crush and jump

moves properly it's your energy which is wasted — and you only have one life to play with.

Fael-Sabath's clones are devious fellows and manage Tanya to another time zone when you find her, so all five levels must be completed in order to save her. This takes a bit of travelling since any level is generally not the correct one for the level in which you found it, meaning that the level's clone cannot be destroyed. If that's the case then a magical bird has to

£24.99



All major graphics cards supported, the spinning Tibus logo preceding the colorful title screen looks well for the game. The knight sprite is very nicely drawn and is animated realistically, and other sprites have a nice color and texture, although they're not so impressively designed. Sound effects are well good for the PC, but above all it's one of the rare quality action games to appear for the machine.

#### OTHER FORMATS

Amiga and ST ports (£24.99) should be out now, with Spectrum (£19.99) and Amstrad (£19.99) ones, £14.99 close behind.

#### WIKINGO

##### Ikari Warriors

SNK, Nintendo ■ £24.95

Spectrum 80%, Commodore 64 87% — 1000000, Amstrad 87 87%, PC 84% — 700000

Long, long after the home computer versions, Nintendo's Ikari Warriors is too late too late. The main sprites are pretty and have defined, pointed limbs, move with two-frame animation (they look like Mr Blah as they run) and shoot massive torii ball bullets, bigger than in any of the other versions. Enemy soldiers are only marginally better defined and the heroes' tanks are small and simple — and horrendous pink backgrounds are played through out on repetition and scroll a touch sickly. The soundtrack is okay for the Nintendo but the jaunty military tune soon irritates. Ikari Warriors is an old game and its concept is very old. Fred says, a fact that isn't helped by this conversion's ugly graphics. If this is one of your favourite coin-ops or you're desperate for another Nintendo game, go ahead, but for the vast majority it's much too expensive for what little it offers.

Machine update 87%.

#### ADM 37

##### Dragon Spirit

Technosoft, ADM ■ £14.99 Spectrum 70%, Amstrad 67% 65% — 170000

This is your typical square-jawed hero saving travelling princess from evil bad-like type affair that on the ST is colorful but a real pain to play. The amount of bullets slung out by the badlike gives you little chance of survival unless you are an extremely good dodger. Scrolling is slow pace, especially when you move from one side of the screen to the other.

Machine update 65%.



So plain to return to the five dollars.

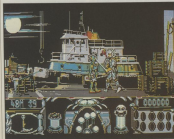
Knight Force is reminiscent of Pyrogaea's Barbarian — a sword-slaying hero mashing left and right facing monsters, and bats — except that control is direct rather than with gestures and icons. Gameplay is rather simplistic, just charging and a few special moves, but it's this that makes Knight Force fun and easy to get into. Time zone selection also helps in this way so that any level of the game can be accessed at leisure and the extra sections don't have to be fought through time and time again in order to see more of the game.

Untaking for the brain but a good test of dexterity, Knight-Force is a pleasant arcade game to pleasantly pass a few hours. **WL**

May the force be with you

# KNIGHT FORCE

Titus





Casualty carnage

# DOGS OF WAR

Elite Systems

**N**o, Elite haven't pilked up the license for the Frederick Forsyth novel, nor the 1980 movie. Instead it's more of a Schwarzenegger or Stallone jingoistic mess in the style of Commando and Ivan Reitman, two of Elite's cash-in conversions; and programmed by Dave Risk who did those two, it's been specifically designed to take advantage of 4-bits.

The complexity this readily allows is immediately apparent: a map of the world has 12 highlighted countries, the locations for the game's missions. The missions can be tackled in any order and each has an associated briefing paragraph and reward to complete. They vary between missions involving kidnapping, assassination and stolen valuables, but all have one thing in common: dozens of gut-busting men, whether soldiers, gangsters or terrorists, out to spill your blood.

To give them a taste of their own bad medicine there's an offensive armoury. The amount of money you have to spend here varies on the mission and whether a one- or two-player game has been selected, but there is at least 10,000 credits in the bank. There's plenty to spend it on,

too: 14 types of gun (including Uzi, Kalashnikov and M16), three missile launchers, a flame thrower, all the necessary ammunition... and a useful toy.

Missions are really a simple, though certainly not easy, matter of running down the enemy sprites while avoiding their fire, and using the keyboard to change between weapons. There are automatic cannon and flame throwers, jeeps and trucks to complete matters, and horizontally scrolling sections to interrupt the traditional vertical ones.

Dogs Of War is Commando on a grand scale — lots of player vehicles and water-wading detract from an Ivan Reitman feel — and the bloodshed and body count are greater still. Your sprite's blood and body are sure to be among them, though, because this is one tough game. Bullets and grenades fly in all directions, and dodging them is challenge enough — actually shooting the bad guys is very much a secondary consideration.

Though graphics vary between them, missions all play quite similarly and have the same big-big map, but difficulty varies and the text adds a little meaning to the mayhem. Mixing and matching weaponry is fun in itself — comparing different firearms'

capabilities and the ammo they use, while keeping an eye on the map — and some items are best suited to particular weapon sections.

Only hardened gamers will be able to get further than halfway through most missions; single players will run out of patience not long after running out of lives. A two-player game makes things easier and more enjoyable, introducing elements of teamwork strategies. The best dual player shoot-and-run gameplay can be

ML

GRADE OF  
**83%**

CRIB

In an amusing title sequence a commando appears, blinks, sneezes, then grins his teeth to spray off a few dozen rounds from his gun. Pleasant drawings of the world and weaponry lead to the next, campaign graphics of the game's backgrounds. Though they're often repetitive and feature work as houses look very flat, they're also colourful and scroll smoothly. The two main sprites are well defined and animated and die in a grisly manner, spinning around before disappearing in a fountain of blood. Other soldiers look okay but leg animation is weak — stiles moving up and down — and vehicles lack depth. Music is marginally off above average and sound effects are dynamic gunfire and mournful cries.

GRADE  
**83%**

CRIB

Very similar if not identical to the ST in most respects. Other than some slight shading and palette differences, graphics are the same and sound differs only in the more professional sounds used for music.

## Stormlord

Release ■ Amiga C128/25

System(s) ■ TOS 1.3, Amiga (ST) sys —  
Platform, Commodore 64 bits — TOS 6.0

The Realm is in trouble. The forces, guardians of the land, have been kidnapped by Badb, a wicked queen who wants to draw the life force from The Realm; it will die if the Stormlord doesn't rescue the forces in time. He has a supply of weapons and the ability to destroy any of Badb's creatures, but also must use tactics such as lures, umbrellas and honey pots in order to complete each level. He's aided by Mael Gair, an eagle summoned from special stones who carries Stormy quickly from A to B.

An excellent title screen sets the very high standard of the graphics. Colour and shading is used brilliantly throughout to provide arcade-quality visuals. Stormlord hasn't been particularly impressive — though I'm sure the badly rated forces will find these forces are equally as professional, with a choice between a moody, dramatic tune or

arresting quality effects, from hunting bees to an eagle cry to a giant stumpy war's goal 'How are you?'

A great arcade adventure with stunning graphics and sound — well worth £20.

Machine update 92%



machine  
**STAR  
UPDATE**





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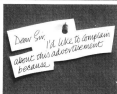
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# SOFTWARE SNAX

## TROJAN

Capcom ■ Nintendo C248

Sorry, not this game has nothing to do with a quiet fall from the of fluctuating fortunes of Troy. Instead, Trojan is the hero of the homocidal scrolling jaunt and hero of the endless number of martial arts masters who are so popular in console games. This one's a kendo break and needs all its sword-brandishing skills to put an end to the oppressive rule of a king, a nasty piece of work who is threatening to take over the whole world (not including Wigan).



(of course)

Trojan's sword can be swept at any of three heights, depending on whether he's standing, crouching or jumping, and he also has a Hi-Man shield to fend off opponents. He needs perfect timing with both if he is to last long against the king's army, composed of many and varied Gengis, Barbarians, mages, etc. Trojan does, the Hammer Brothers (Hercules and Henry) parallel, slathers... this game's in top-order. Hardly, there are a selection of picks-ups, and/or-

ing such abilities as super jumps, increased speed and high-power sword.

It's just a shame this game isn't endowed with any originality or addictive qualities. Though limited in colour and detail, backgrounds are adequate, scrolling smoothly and there's some neat definition among the generally unremarkable sprites. Music notes and effects are weak little noises.

Difficulty is not why too tight, maze-brandering sodas approach in such frequency that progress through a level is very slow, that a knife thrower forces you to change your reference frame, usually too late to prevent enemy loss. Other sprites are at least equally handy and offer a few moments of fascination that throwing the Nintendo smelter TV around the room becomes a temptation.

Other than a few unusual sprites Trojan is one big state. Gameplay is both highly predictable and highly aggravating — and worth the effort. **WL**

Machine rating 48%

## ACTION FIGHTER

Probird ■ Atari ST C24.06, Commodore 64 C16.06, C16.06, C16.06

Probird are at pains not to spouty who you're up against in this multi-vehicle buster — it's just 'the enemy'. There are five vertically scrolling levels and you begin on a motorcycle. Obstacles, the machine and other vehicles have to be avoided, but the latter can be shot with a built-in gun. This weaponry is upgraded to double-fire, missiles, rear-fire and limited invulnerability by entering any Mega zone that appears.

Depending on vehicles destroyed, lost-level coins are released which relieve the cyber's capabilities. When four have been collected it can be transformed into a car, then two more parts allow it to fly. In the at-

the objective is to bomb enemy bases and aircraft, and a Mega laser-ray 'super' gives better weaponry.

Bonus points are gained by collecting occasional flags; collecting all 20 for a level gives an extra large bonus.

A very obviously Hunter variant, Action Fighter's graphics are as well-balanced as its gameplay. Though smooth and well scrolling, the ST has simple backgrounds, using five colours and sprites which are little better, with simple sound effects and the



music.

It's a similar story on the C64, though some ugly colour schemes are used and the 8-bit graphics are fairly blocky, sprites generally being almost square in design. Scrolling's good but sound is made for the Commodore, and gameplay is a little easier than the ST's.

Action Fighter is fun and instantly playable but its outmoded gameplay and poor graphics mean that if doesn't have your attention for long. Certainly there's enough to entertain for an hour or two but that just isn't enough to warrant the price tag — at budget it would be fine. Only serious Sky Hunter fans need apply. **WL**

Machine ratings Atari ST 58%

Commodore 64 54%

## GUN SMOKE

Capcom ■ Nintendo C24.06

This loan isn't big enough for the 40% of us? Okay, so it's not 'get quite the same ring' to it but it's fitting for it's the machine during the gold rush. In 1948, to be precise, when it was taken over by a mean and large group of bandits called the Wingates. They robbed the bankrupted the money, groped the screen, drank at the whiskey and ate at the back Fruit Pastries — generally making a nuisance of themselves.

True for a hero, maverick, complete with spades white shirt and jungle spurs Billy Bob (well he is The Visitor), it's his staking footprints that are guided through six vertically scrolling levels, armed with a pair of six-shooters capable of firing many more than six bullets before reload-



## FAST LANE

Atari ■ Atari ST C16.06

You've had many chances to become an F-1 champion, but Fast Lane gives you the opportunity to become top of the C-1 league. You are offered a set of options — including a practice mode — with manual or auto transmission. It's best to start in auto mode because you don't have to mess about with changing gear and can concentrate on steering the car.

To race you first have to qualify for a place in the grid by simply recording a decent lap time in the time (span allowed) if you are happy with your current position pressing escape starts the lap.

Typical human brains proliferate, so along with your psychopathic fellow racers screaming sound barriers and emitting

radioactive obstacles in the order of the dip. Smashing into any, or other cars, causes damage which can be sorted out with the odd oil can.

At the end of each race you are informed of your position in the drivers' league table before tackling the next track.

All points lie on the option screen (especially impressive is the pit score showing the car with the back panel removed for repairs), but when you get to the actual race things go rapidly downhill. Unusually the opposing cars look, as if they have had large weights dropped onto them, they are so squat (plus they appear torn out of nowhere). With so many racing games around for Commodore it's surprising to stand out from the crowd, and this one doesn't. **MC**

Machine rating 35%

ing. Though ammunition for them is limited, Billy can collect other weapons and switch between them at any time: machine-gun, Magnum (Napalm launcher) — all of which don't exist in the Wild West, but then Billy's a very resourceful guy. Here also is a rilly horse race, but as his speed has the curious habit of falling in water barrels, he rarely has the chance to prove it.

Ordinary barrels and figures are the usual cannon (or pistol) fodder but at the end of each level one of the *Wildguns*' singedlers shines up for a show down.

The aging coin-op is reproduced nicely. Though repetitive and lacking real detail (as in the original), the smooth-scrolling backgrounds have a pleasing look, bringing the Wild West's obscurity to the TV screen. Figures could have had more detail, but they're still representative of Western characters and are animated nicely. The music is dramatic and ingenua a rilly hot fun time bounce song.

A jumble sequel in *Commando*, Gun/Guns is a graphical change, but most importantly introduces pick-ups and extra weapons to the simple gameplay. It isn't new, though, and infusing this isn't helped by the control system. Buttons are fire to the left, button two to the right, and both have to be held down to fire freight ahead. When adjusted to this proves a versatile and stimulating system and helps the sometimes annoying difficulty of the shoot-and-run gameplay.

A good contention with high playability and challenging if similar levels. Worth cashing in a few nugs for. **MS**

**Machine rating 73%.**

## IRON TRACKERS

Infogrames ■ £19.99 Atari ST, Amiga

Iron Island is the venue for this violent game for one or two players loosely based around the sort of quad bike racing. Each character is defined on a photo-shoot screen of head, torso, hair etc from which a car is surely to emerge.

Staggy with your creation, it only remains to aim your bike with one of four weapons — a 12.7 mm machine gun, a bazooka, a booster and an all gun. The object now is to get from one side of the island to the other in one piece, travelling from stage to stage following arrows on a map. Ify clicking on the first destination you are shown outside a powerful Quad bike, moving vertically up the screen (in two-player mode the second player's character is shown in a separate window below yours).

The going then starts that quiet however. Different sections contain different hazards and very changeable weather conditions, from industrial heavy rains, marked by blowpipes whirling, raindrops and nasty looking clouds, to sunny Arctic winters. At the end of a set time period you are stopped and whether you have reached the end of the section or not, you are informed of your be-



## INTERDICTOR

Claris ■ Archimedes (Clas)

Touchdown in its last month's *Archimedes* games feature, *Interdictor* provides an out-of-the-pocket view from a jet fighter on a mission to destroy an invading force from a river valley.

Armed with 30mm cannons, air-to-ground rockets and heat-seeking air missiles, you pilot the plane 500m north to bomb the enemy headquarters, avoiding — or better still — destroying ack-ack guns, turrets, barges, surface-to-air missiles and aircraft. In addition to bog-standard flight aim controls and displays there's a variable range radar, altimeter and map screen, and a Heads-Up Display, all to aid your task.

*Interdictor*'s landscape is sparse, to say the least. Grey ashy from the river and all you'll see is a plain blue sky and a plainer yellow-brown ground, not exactly thrilling. Bridges, hills (well, pointed bumps, then), roads and the river give you something nice to look at, though not painted with polygons they're sharply defined and are convincingly well animated, and the enemy vehicles combine well with the realistic tilting movements of the horizon.

First impressions are deceptive. A glance at the manual reveals an acute lack of pages in comparison with the weighty *MicroProse* tomes, but this and the related depth of the game isn't where *Interdictor*'s strength lies. Whereas there isn't a massive variety of targets to destroy or defeat,

and physical targets.

If you survive you go on to the next section and so on until you reach the finishing post.

Although there are some quite nice touches (the building of the base for example) *Iron Trackers* on both machines becomes tedious very quickly. The game is too frustrating to get into, and when you do finally get somewhere you wonder why you bothered. **MC**

**Machine rating 57.50%**

**Amiga 51%.**

## PICTIONARY

Gemtek ■ Atari ST, Amiga £24.99

First came *Trivial Pursuit*, then *Trivial Pursuit II* and now a game very similar, but where clues are conveyed to others by pictures. Based on the board game, you have the choice of one to four players, or if a party of people suddenly descends, you can play in up to four teams.

The playing board is made up from five different coloured squares representing the five subject categories (the latter fall to show People, Objects, Action, Difficult and All Player). In one-player mode the computer becomes the artist, but in team mode one person can volunteer for the task with their team mates guessing.

Whichever mode, you start by clicking the cursor on the box of cards due in the top-right of the screen. The computer picks a question card corresponding to the square you are currently on.

Next the taken to the art package part of the game, where either the computer or human player draws a picture using the



to undertake different missions, *Interdictor* wins through with the most technically impressive simulation of flight yet seen on a micro.

You immediately see the power of the Arcus art work once you get airborne (easy enough, thankfully). With a stunning combination of movement, responsive screen handling and mathematically perfect edged manipulation (well, 99% perfect) the game comes into its own with 30-bit speed and action to match. (Some moments ensue when the missiles fly and shells from defending ack-ack guns slide past your attacking aircraft. Add to this some excellent sound effects (considering the Arcus's less than gloriol speaker system) and you've got a surprisingly good simulation. Forget about having depth in that F-16 Combat Pilot or complexity to worry *Interdictor* is enjoyable enough just to fly. At last, a game you can show off to inferior 16-bit owners!

**MS/MS**

**Machine rating 80%.**

options available (and there are a fair few). A set time limit is allowed for those guessing to speak the answer to the question, the space bar is then tapped to see whether they were right or wrong. Honestly is demanded of players, because it's only enough to tell the computer something less than the truth if you're on your own.

In two-player or team modes, for a correct answer a die is thrown and your counter is moved across the board — and another round begins. Answer wrongly, and control of the toiled game to the next player-teams. This continues until one of the counters reaches the finish line.

Despite the good graphics package, *Pictionary* feels closer to a game that must be played by at least two people because it's not fun at all against the computer. It is nicely presented, and you certainly don't need to be a great artist in use the art package which has obviously had a lot of thought behind it, in fact it's simply itself to draw with. It's 16-bit versions are virtually identical, but we find more options on the game, so follow the time-honoured cliché and try before you buy.

**Machine rating: Atari ST 80%.**

**Amiga 80%.**





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